

WOMEN, CHILDREN AND FAMILY LIFE IN THE NEVADA INTERIOR 1900-1930S

Interviewee: Lena Hammond, Inez Finnegan, Elsie Humphrey,
Josephine Johnson Foster, Elizabeth Roberts

Interviewed: 1979-1980

Published: 1987

Interviewer: Elizabeth Nelson Patrick

UNOHP Catalog #143

Description

Although discovery of the Comstock Lode and the subsequent development of Virginia City gave early impetus to Nevada's economy, by 1878 the Comstock was in decline. Nevada entered a twenty-year period of economic depression, from which it emerged only with fresh discoveries of gold and silver in the hills of Nye and Esmeralda Counties. Tonopah and Goldfield were the most prosperous communities to form around the rich new strikes, but much of southwestern Nevada was affected. A booming, frontier society developed, collapsing abruptly when most of the ore was exhausted in the 1920s.

This volume consists of interviews with women who lived in the Nevada interior between 1900 and 1930. The reader will find a rich mixture of recollections, all of which serve to give human texture to the documented history of that turbulent period. Views are provided of life in Goldfield, Tonopah, Millers, Austin, Railroad Valley and on a Reese River ranch. Subjects include schooling, commerce, recreation, transportation and a host of special topics.

**WOMEN, CHILDREN AND FAMILY LIFE
IN THE NEVADA INTERIOR
1900-1930S**

**WOMEN, CHILDREN AND FAMILY LIFE
IN THE NEVADA INTERIOR
1900-1930s**

Oral Histories
Conducted by Elizabeth Patrick
Edited by R. T. King

University of Nevada Oral History Program

Copyright 1987
University of Nevada Oral History Program
Mail Stop 0324
Reno, Nevada 89557
unohp@unr.edu
<http://www.unr.edu/oralhistory>

All rights reserved. Published 1987.
Printed in the United States of America

Publication Staff:
Director: R.T. King
Program Coordinators: Cynthia Bassett, Nancy Broughton and Shelley Chase
Text Production: Linda Sommer and Kay Stone

University of Nevada Oral History Program Use Policy

All UNOHP interviews are copyrighted materials. They may be downloaded and/or printed for personal reference and educational use, but not republished or sold. Under “fair use” standards, excerpts of up to 1000 words may be quoted for publication without UNOHP permission as long as the use is non-commercial and materials are properly cited. The citation should include the title of the work, the name of the person or people interviewed, the date of publication or production, and the fact that the work was published or produced by the University of Nevada Oral History Program (and collaborating institutions, when applicable). Requests for permission to quote for other publication, or to use any photos found within the transcripts, should be addressed to the UNOHP, Mail Stop 0324, University of Nevada, Reno, NV 89557-0324. Original recordings of most UNOHP interviews are available for research purposes upon request.

CONTENTS

Preface to the Digital Edition	ix
Original Preface	xi
Introduction	xiii
1. Lena Hammond	1
Memories of Austin, Bodie and Goldfield, 1900-1910	
2. Inez Finnegan	11
Growing Up on the Butterfield Springs Ranch in Railroad Valley, 1905-1925	
3. Elsie Humphrey	33
Life on a Reese River Ranch, 1903-1915; Manhattan and Tonopah, 1920-1945	
4. Josephine Johnson Foster	49
Recollections of Life in Millers, 1920-1926	
5. Elizabeth Roberts	57
Memories of Tonopah, 1916-1970s	
Photographs	67
Original Index: For Reference Only	71

PREFACE TO THE DIGITAL EDITION

Established in 1964, the University of Nevada Oral History Program (UNOHP) explores the remembered past through rigorous oral history interviewing, creating a record for present and future researchers. The program's collection of primary source oral histories is an important body of information about significant events, people, places, and activities in twentieth and twenty-first century Nevada and the West.

The UNOHP wishes to make the information in its oral histories accessible to a broad range of patrons. To achieve this goal, its transcripts must speak with an intelligible voice. However, no type font contains symbols for physical gestures and vocal modulations which are integral parts of verbal communication. When human speech is represented in print, stripped of these signals, the result can be a morass of seemingly tangled syntax and incomplete sentences—totally verbatim transcripts sometimes verge on incoherence. Therefore, this transcript has been lightly edited.

While taking great pains not to alter meaning in any way, the editor may have removed false starts, redundancies, and the “uhs,” “ahs,” and other noises with which speech is often liberally sprinkled; compressed some passages which, in unaltered form, misrepresent the chronicler's meaning; and relocated some material to place information in its intended context. Laughter is represented with [laughter] at the end of a sentence in which it occurs, and ellipses are used to indicate that a statement has been interrupted or is incomplete...or that there is a pause for dramatic effect.

As with all of our oral histories, while we can vouch for the authenticity of the interviews in the UNOHP collection, we advise readers to keep in mind that these are remembered pasts, and we do not claim that the recollections are entirely free of error. We can state, however, that the transcripts accurately reflect the oral history recordings on which they were based. Accordingly, each transcript should be approached with the

same prudence that the intelligent reader exercises when consulting government records, newspaper accounts, diaries, and other sources of historical information. All statements made here constitute the remembrance or opinions of the individuals who were interviewed, and not the opinions of the UNOHP.

In order to standardize the design of all UNOHP transcripts for the online database, most have been reformatted, a process that was completed in 2012. This document may therefore differ in appearance and pagination from earlier printed versions. Rather than compile entirely new indexes for each volume, the UNOHP has made each transcript fully searchable electronically. If a previous version of this volume existed, its original index has been appended to this document for reference only. A link to the entire catalog can be found online at <http://oralhistory.unr.edu/>.

For more information on the UNOHP or any of its publications, please contact the University of Nevada Oral History Program at Mail Stop 0324, University of Nevada, Reno, NV, 89557-0324 or by calling 775/784-6932.

Alicia Barber
Director, UNOHP
July 2012

ORIGINAL PREFACE

The University of Nevada Oral History Program (OHP) engages in systematic interviewing of persons who can provide firsthand descriptions of events, people and places that give history its substance. The products of this research are the tapes of the interviews and their transcriptions.

In themselves, oral history interviews are *not* history. However, they often contain valuable primary source material, as useful in the process of historiography as the written sources to which historians have customarily turned. Verifying the accuracy of all of the statements made in the course of an interview would require more time and money than the OHP's operating budget permits. The program can vouch that the statements were made, but it cannot attest that they are free of error. Accordingly, oral histories should be read with the same prudence that the reader exercises when consulting government records, newspaper accounts, diaries and other sources of historical information.

It is the policy of the OHP to produce transcripts that are as close to verbatim as

possible, but some alteration of the text is generally both unavoidable and desirable. When human speech is captured in print the result can be a morass of tangled syntax, false starts and incomplete sentences, sometimes verging on incoherency. The type font contains no symbols for the physical gestures and the diverse vocal modulations that are integral parts of communication through speech. Experience shows that totally verbatim transcripts are often largely unreadable and therefore a waste of the resources expended in their production. While keeping alterations to a minimum the OHP will, in preparing a text:

- a. generally delete false starts, redundancies and the uhs, ahs and other noises with which speech is often liberally sprinkled;

- b. occasionally compress language that would be confusing to the reader in unaltered form;

- c. rarely shift a portion of a transcript to place it in its proper context; and

- d. enclose in [brackets] explanatory information or words that were not uttered

but have been added to render the text intelligible.

There will be readers who prefer to take their oral history straight, without even the minimal editing that occurred in the production of this text; they are directed to the tape recording.

Copies of all or part of this work and the tape recording from which it is derived are available from;

The University of Nevada
Oral History Program
Mailstop 0324
University of Nevada, Reno 89557
(775) 784-6932

INTRODUCTION

Although discovery of the Comstock Lode and the subsequent development of Virginia City gave early impetus to Nevada's economy, by 1878 the Comstock was in decline. Nevada entered a 20 year period of economic depression, from which it emerged only with fresh discoveries of gold and silver in the hills of Nye and Esmeralda Counties. Tonopah and Goldfield were the most prosperous communities to form around the rich new strikes, but much of southwestern Nevada was affected. A booming, frontier society developed, collapsing abruptly when most of the ore was exhausted in the 1920s.

Thanks to the generosity of the family of Mary Cole Nash, it was possible to capture on audiotape some of the experience of growing up and living through this important period in Nevada's history. In 1979 and 1980, with a grant from the Nash family, Elizabeth Patrick conducted 5 oral history interviews of women who had lived in the area between 1900 and 1930. Again with Nash family support, the Oral History Program of the University of Nevada, Reno transcribed

and edited the work in 1986. In these pages the reader will find a rich mixture of recollections, all of which serve to give human texture to the documented history of that turbulent period. Views are provided of life in Goldfield, Tonopah, Millers, Austin, Railroad Valley and on a Reese River ranch. Subjects include schooling, commerce, recreation, transportation and a host of social topics.

Nevada is fortunate to include among its citizens patrons of history such as the Nash family. Were it not for private support similar to that which made this volume possible, much of the state's past would go unrecorded. The Oral History Program is pleased to have been a part of this worthy project.

R. T. King
1986

LENA HAMMOND: MEMORIES OF AUSTIN, BODIE AND GOLDFIELD, 1900-1910

Elizabeth Patrick: Mrs. Hammond, where were you born?

Lena Hammond: Austin, Nevada, 30 September 1892.

When did your family come to Austin?

Oh, they came out from Michigan, I don't know just how long ago. And my sister, Maine, was born there and married T. Falvey, who was born in the same place.

That would have been Eagle River, where your father was born?

Yes.

How many children were in your family?

There was 11.

Oh, that's a good-sized family. And 10 of them survived?

Yes.

Mrs. Hammond, what did your father do?

He was a miner.

Had he mined in Michigan?

Oh, I doubt it. He was a young man when he come out. I think he started in Bodie. We never talked about Michigan much, but....

Your father was William Falvey; your mother's name was Caroline Wolf, and you told me earlier that she also came from Eagle River.

Well, they came out to Bodie, when they had those bad men from Bodie, you know—when you couldn't even have a clothesline outside. I used to hear her tell us that they'd bring their clothesline in every night.

Because people would steal?

Oh, steal everything.

So they came to Bodie first?

At first. My father mined there. And I don't remember the children that were born there. Then they went to Austin.

*Can you remember where you lived in Austin?
Is the house still there?*

Yes. It's one street back of the main street. You know, in Austin there's an embankment on every street. See, it was a hilly town—oh, terrible—but *beautiful*...rich flowers and trees. And it was kept up. And then they had to make the streets. Well, they've never been able to find out from any of the old-timers how they leveled off those streets. You see, you could only build one side of the street on every street. Houses were the same way.

Did you go to school in Austin?

Just for one year.

The first grade?

Yes. I remember that Miss Price was the teacher, and the principal was Gayhart. I think I was right around 6 years old. And any old time you went to school in Austin, you climbed Vesuvius! Oh, it was *way* up there, and then you'd have to come down for lunch.

Oh, you mean the school was on a hill?

Yes, it was *way* up. You had to come down for lunch; then you'd have to rush back up, because Mother didn't believe in being tardy. The only thing we were allowed to be tardy for was sickness. That's all. If someone'd have

a sore throat, our mother said, "We don't want to pass it on to somebody else."

How large was the school?

Oh, it was quite a beautiful school—one room. I think it was brick, but I wouldn't say for sure.

The teacher taught all grades, then?

Oh, no, she taught the first and the second grade. Then the third and fourth was somebody else.

Yes. You don't remember who those other teachers were?

No.

Did you have a large house in Austin, or....

Oh, yes. We had a pretty good house, and it was all fenced in. A lot of people had the wrought iron around their houses; we had a picket fence. I liked it very much because it was right off of Main Street. We never were allowed to go to Main Street, except that Mother would send us to the post office or go to the butcher shop or to get something at the grocery store. My sister and I—she was 2 years older—when we'd get into the butcher shop, the fellow would always give us a piece of baloney, or else we could have a dill pickle! [laughs] All the kids would do that, you know. And, of course, when Mother'd say, "Well, I want you to run down to the butcher shop," we looked at each other to see who's going to go! [laughs] We didn't get down that Street very often.

Why didn't your mother want you to go down on Main Street?

She didn't believe in young people being on the main street. "No," she said, "that's no place for children to be playing; that's out on a long street." Well, after a while they get so if you let them go down all the time, you'd find them down there all the time. She was very, very particular about what we did.

Was she strict with you?

Well, if she promised you a licking, you got it— with a hairbrush. But she never struck us anywhere but where we sat down, because she didn't believe in that. But I'll tell you, if she promised you a party—you know, if you'd done something nice—she fixed up everything, and she gave you the party. But if you went out and she saw you do something she didn't want you to do, she gave you a licking.

You said you went to school one year in Austin, and then you moved to Bodie, California, didn't you?

Yes.

Can you tell me a little bit about your life in Bodie?

Well, Bodie had no trees, but the grass would grow up to your hips. You see, the mill and the mines were right in the town, and they used the cyanide for extracting the gold. They had great big immense ponds right in the town. Of course, they were all alike, including covers, on account of the children. But that worked itself through the ground, and you'd get a tree, and it'd get as high as this house, and then it would die because of the cyanide. The roots were gone.

Let's see, what else did we do down there? Oh, where you come in for Bodie was the

snow. Oh, my Lord, there was the most awful snow you ever saw in your life! [laughter] Just amazing the snow during the night. Out in front, the house would be covered almost up to the.... The windows'd be covered, and we'd have to bring the snow through to the back. In a couple of days the back'd be covered, and you'd have to bring it the other way.

Bodie had nice, nice people. The boys or the men would get out and put a great big bonfire up on the hill and have it there, and we could go out for one hour and sleigh ride during school hours.

You left Bodie and came back to Nevada, to Goldfield, about 1904, right?

Yes. We came in on a stage. My dad and my oldest brother were here already. And, gee, Goldfield was busy; you know, all these people—hitchhikers and all. We stopped all there right on the corner of Main and Ransom, and Dad was sitting on a beer barrel waiting for us, because you couldn't afford a taxi. The taxis were drawn by horses.

Dad had 2 tents up on Euclid, and here we come up. Right down there where the high school is, catty-corner down there—there's nobody living in it now—that was our home. We all had to pitch, because we had to fix the place for the boys and the girls, and my mother and dad had the other tent.

Did you have a wooden floor?

Yes. And it was so terribly hot then.

What about water?

We bought it. These fellows delivered to you. There was 2 young men, and you had your barrels, and you'd buy water...expensive. I'll tell you, that's the one time you looked after water.

Did your mother cook in the tent?

Oh, yes, in her tent. That one was larger for Dad and she and the babies, but our tent was right next door. Mother was a very fine cook, and she was a very fine housekeeper.

Dad would go down when the fellow came in with the lumber. And if he was there, he could get 4 pieces or 5 pieces—what they'd want to give you. And you brought them up, and you kind of stored them back till you got enough to raise your tent up.

You couldn't buy all the lumber you wanted?

Oh, no. Because it had to come in on the freight. And Dad had to get down there; if he didn't, it would be gone.

Then did you build the walls of the tent up?

Yes, they built it up halfway, first. And then after they got enough carpenters in there, why, then we had a carpenter come down and fix the roof.

So then you no longer had a tent; you had a real wooden house?

Yes, you really had a home, what you'd call it, because you made it large enough and took the one tent down, see.

And your mother cooked inside. Did she have a stove inside?

Oh, you ought to see that little tent. It was better than some of the houses I've been in.

Well, I was concerned about the danger of fire.

No, no. You watched your pipes. Dad would get up there and look at the pipes, you know.

And did you have kerosene lamps?

[laughter] To start with we did, but you had electricity at Bodie, and Austin was lamps all those years.

But you had electricity soon in Goldfield?

You bet they had, because I don't remember ever washing a lamp. But all the time we lived in Austin was kerosene lamps and candles. When we went to Bodie, the same thing. And then they got all built up. But I don't know about Pioche. We passed through Pioche, and we stayed overnight at one time on a trip, and it had kerosene lamps.

Where did your mother get her food supplies?

We had stores there.

Did you get any fresh things?

Oh, yes, there was ranchers come in. And we never had any trouble that way like we have now. Milk was hard to get and to keep, because you didn't have Frigidaire. They had the kind that was built in, and the air'd go through. You'd build a kind of a box in the window, and then have a gunnysack over that. Then you kept a big pan of water dripping, and that's the way you kept your meat and everything.

That's a desert ice box, isn't it?

Yes, that's it.

What did you do for fun in those early days as kids? Your mother wouldn't let you go down on Main Street in Austin. What did she think about Main Street in Goldfield?

Well, we didn't get to do much on that, either. But we were older, and we had lots of fun. We had a lot of games.

Like what?

Oh, Lotto and.... It's a kind of a card game that they had...all the kids'd play it. We *always* played out in front; that would have been the neighbor kids. We couldn't go over there in front of *their* house because Mother didn't believe in pestering people, as she called it. So then we'd play hide-and-go-seek or anything that...that's the games we played. And in the home we were a great family to play together. The boys would always have the bigger games.

Did you have any dances or parties or bingo games or...?

Oh, my goodness, when we did, it was heaven! We had the best dance hall in the state. We didn't go to dances until we were 15. And when you went down there, they had men that looked after you. You had program dances, and there was none of this cutting up. When you danced, you danced around, and you never hit anybody. If you hit anybody twice, somebody'd come over and tap you on the shoulder and say, "Oh, no, you don't."

These men were kind of chaperones?

Oh, they were there all the time.

What kind of music did you have?

Always brought the orchestra in; we had beautiful music. Oh, we had the most beautiful orchestra yet.

Where did the orchestra come from? Were they Goldfield people?

Some of them were when it wasn't a big dance. But the big dances, we brought the orchestra in.

And these were church sponsored?

Well, there was lots of them that wasn't church here, but we all went, because it was.... And the floor was just like glass.

What activities did the church sponsor?

Well, they always had wonderful card parties, beautiful prizes. And they had ball games.

Did the various churches vie with each other on the ball field?

No. They brought in a man to pitch the baseball. We had a diamond out there. And then we always had a clown on the first base. He was as funny as a crutch! you'd forget about the ball game, and you'd watch him. He was playing in the ball game, but the things he could do...! He was a businessman. Everybody loved him. His name was Rosenthal. They'd have a team from Tonopah, and they'd come over, or one of the others someplace else would come in.

What about the school in Goldfield?

Goldfield had beautiful schools.

You went to grade school here?

I just went one year to the eighth grade. And that was way down...it wasn't a schoolhouse, but it was an old office of some kind that they had put up and left there. And in another room there was the other grades. And then the smaller grades...you know where Brown-Parker is up here by the hotel? Right on the corner there was a building there, and the principal had the first and second and third and fourth grades.

Oh, so the school was sort of scattered around town?

Oh, yes. Well, of course, they *had* to.

At 14 I went to work for Max Meyer and Company. It was just like Livingstons in San Francisco or any of those big stores. It was right in between Columbia and Crook streets, where the Consolidated Building is now. Max Meyer's was a great big stone building.

Now, I didn't ask for the job; I was just passing, and Mr. Cohen said, "Say, young lady, would you like to go to work?"

"Oh," I said, "my mother wouldn't let me."

He said, "Well, do you suppose she'd let you?"

I said, "I don't know, but I'll ask her."

Oh, didn't I have to shed the tears! She wanted me to finish school. Our high school was beautiful. "Well," she says, "don't you ever mention education to me." But, I figure between the Goldfield and the Bodie school and Max Meyer's, I couldn't have got a better education.

What did Max Meyer's sell?

They sold just like Livingstons in San Francisco. Nothing shoddy. They had sheets and pillowcases and things like that. And

then they had beautiful underwear, because, you see, they had a big sporting house there down North Main. And those girls just bought hundreds and hundreds of dollars worth. I mean, you talk about beauty! Their faces were the prettiest things you ever looked at.

I was there about a year and a half, and one day I walked in, and Mr. Cohen [Jacob M. Cohen, a partner in Max Meyer and Company] said, "We've got something nice for you today, Lena."

And I said, "Oh, have you?"

He says, "Yes." He says, "You're going upstairs." Say, if you could see what they had upstairs! They made your hats, had a milliner there. And over here was the poor lady. Oh, the most gorgeous suits and coats! And down here was... all the girls were great for kimonos.

You mean over in the red light district?

Yes, they were the ones. And I'm telling you, he never showed anything shoddy. If you got a sweater, you got a sweater worthwhile. Then, right in the corner as you come up the stairs, there was the alteration room; they'd alter all your dresses.

I'll tell you what happened to me. We went upstairs, and I tended cash and helped with the shelves. I got into the beautiful kimonos. And, of course, I had never seen anything so gorgeous. Silk, crepe de chine, everything, because that's all they wore down there. I was putting them back—folding—and there was a beautiful pink one. And you know, they're all lace up here and.... It wasn't very busy, so I got in this 3-way mirror, and I put it on. I was going this way and that way. Just then the forelady come in—her name was Duffy—that had charge of that part of it. She said, "Lena, what are you doing?"

"Oh," I said, "this is the prettiest kimono."
And I said, "When I get enough money, I'm going to buy it."

She says, "*You take that off!* That's for floozies!"

I said, "What's a floozy?" [laughter] I didn't know it was...I was just a kid. I took it off all right, but....

Didn't nice ladies buy things like that?

Very rarely kimonos. But they had the loveliest clientele; you couldn't find anything better. And they never showed you anything shoddy. It was a pleasure to show them the materials....

Did you ever buy that pink kimono?

No, sir, but I've always regretted it.
[laughter]

How much did you earn when you worked for Meyer's?

Oh, my gosh, we only got about \$14 a week.

And no benefits, no pensions and...?

Oh, nothing. Only we got a discount for anything we bought.

You mentioned the girls down in the red-light district. What was the town attitude toward those women? I mean you've talked about their exquisite taste and their ability to buy these things. What did the ordinary woman think about these girls?

They never had anything to do with them. Down there they had their own dance hail; they had their own cafe. And I guess

their rooms were magnificent. They dressed beautifully, and they *always* wore white gloves and hats. I used to love to wait on them. Gee, they were the ones to get a hold of.

Can you remember any of their names?

Only one, and she was stuck on Max Meyer.

And what was her name?

Miss Raymond. He wouldn't marry her.

Did he like her, though?

Well, I think he did. I know he used to go down there all the time because she was crazy about him. So when he wouldn't marry her, she committed suicide. She's buried out in the burying ground here somewhere, and when they buried her they had the band out—the little one that they had around town.

Did she have any mourners?

Oh, yes, all the girls went! [laughter] But, you know, I felt sorry for her, because she was the most refined, good-looking girl.

Do you know where she came from?

No, I don't know anything....

About what year was this?

Oh, that was way back—1904, 1905, 1906. I imagine she went around 1907.

Was it reported in the newspaper?

I doubt it. I never paid any attention; those things didn't interest me.

And so she's buried out at the burial ground, then?

But I always think of Max Meyer's....

He was a nice man to work for?

Oh, grand. And he protected us, you know. I mean, he'd tell the salesmen nothing doing if they're fooling around with the girls. He meant giggling, laughing and cutting up.

He didn't like traveling salesmen, then?

No, no. He told us, "The reason why I do that is because they're all tough! And they don't care about you. When they get through, they go out someplace else."

So he was looking out for you?

Oh, he did. He was wonderful.

What happened with Mr. Meyer? How long did he stay in Goldfield?

Well, the funny part.. he was going to take a vacation, and we never saw him afterwards.

When did he leave?

Shortly after the girl committed suicide. And his brother never knew right up to the time that we closed the store.

Do you think he died?

Ho, no. I think he just got up and left.

Did Mr. Cohen know where he was?

No. He said, "I'd give all the money I have if I knew where Max was.

Well, Mr. Cohen and his partner—how long did they stay in Goldfield? Did they have other business interests?

No, I don't think so. They were here over 4 years. Then they moved to San Francisco. They had a big sale and sold out everything. And I don't know who took the building over.

Then what did you do for a job?

I went right out and was over in the post office, sending a money order out, and a fellow said, "My gosh, Lena, do you want to do bookkeeping?"

"Why," I said, "I don't know a debit from credits."

He said, "You want to learn?"

I said, "Do I!"

He said, "All right. Come to work in the morning." I went to the grocery store, and he was the certified accountant. He taught me all about the bookkeeping, and that's how I knew my bookkeeping. And those people sold out to Nasbits. Then, of course, Mrs. Nasbit took my job.

Mrs. Hammond, you gave to the library, as part of its permanent collection, a program from the Toiyabe Literary Club in Manhattan, Nevada. Can you tell me something about the literary club?

Well, Mrs. Humphrey and her daughter-in-law, Mrs. Fancher and Mrs. Abernathy—they're all old-timers. After Bill and I had bought the home out there, they asked me to come and join, which I did. They'd have a meeting about once a month, and they'd have different committees; you'd take it each time. After you got started, they'd say, "Well, now, next meeting will be at such-and-such a time,

and Lena Hammond and Mrs. Hyde will be hostesses.”

Would that be in your home? Did you go from house to house?

Oh, no. They had a nice place to entertain. They had a lovely little place. I don't know who's got it now, but it was a lovely place... and big. They had it when I went there. I don't know how long it was going on. We'd go up there, and we'd have our meeting, and then they'd have refreshments. Then we talked things over.

What kind of things?

Oh, about the business and what they were going to do to make a little bit of money and try to get some more members, because a lot of people moved away. And they were trying to keep it going. Well, it did go till Mrs. Fancher left.

What did you do in the literary club?

Oh, all we did was just meet and have the meeting and maybe a luncheon.

Why did you call it “literary club”?

You'd have to ask Mrs. Humphrey that. They were the big wigs.

Oh! [laughter] Well, did you read books?

You could if you wanted to and discuss it when you're out there with them.

Did you often do that?

I didn't. I do more reading now than I ever did. had things to do beside that.

INEZ FINNEGAN: GROWING UP ON THE BUTTERFIELD SPRINGS RANCH IN RAILROAD VALLEY, 1905-1925

Inez Sharp Finnegan: I was born 4 May 1905 in Nye County, Nevada, on a ranch called Butterfield Springs. The springs are still there, and the house—it was a new house at the time I was born—is still there, inhabited by some of my relatives.

Elizabeth Patrick: Did your father establish the ranch?

No, he bought it from a man named Butterfield, who had homesteaded it. That's a long time ago. It was about 18 years before I was born that he bought it. It would have to be in the 1800s somewhere. I was there until I was 8 years old first, and then I was about 9 when we moved back. Aside from going away to high school, I was there until I was 20. Then I went to Ely, Nevada, and then to the Los Angeles area. We were around different places in California for a couple of years, and then back out to Railroad Valley. [Railroad Valley is approximately 100 miles in length, and is enclosed by the White Pine, Quinn Canyon and Grant ranges to the east, and the

Pancake Range to the west. The Sharp ranch at Butterfield Springs is 14 miles southwest of Currant.—ed.] That's where that ranch is, in Railroad Valley. Never was a rail in it.

How did it get the name?

Because it was level, and they said it would be ideal; they wouldn't have to do much building up to put rail road tracks through there because of the level terrain. But the railroad never went through there.

For high school I went to Currant Creek; that's still in Nye County. The high school was a private school to begin with, but then it was taken over by the county. But the grade school was a public county school. The high school was sort of a subscription or tuition thing. That was just because they had to have money to start it, and those that could, put it up. The others could've attended; we wouldn't have cared. But there was nobody else to attend. We were already there. They put up the money, so much for each child, and got the equipment. And we were on the play stage of the regular

school. They had a grade school there, and then they had the platform built up there for having the school programs, and we had that. They put up folding doors, and that was our high school. There were 7 students—all girls, except our brother; he went a little while, and then he quit. Then we finished the term with all girls.

So it was makeshift, then? It was really part of the grade school?

The building was. Yes, it was just the play platform; they turned it into a school for us! [laughter]

The teacher was an elderly woman. She said she had 6 tomboys and one lady in the school, and I wasn't the lady. [laughter] My sister Edna was the sedate one. The rest of us believed in having fun when recess came. We went out and we romped; we played ball with the boys. The young men would come there at recess time—they knew when it was. All those working around the neighborhood that could get off for a little while when their bosses left, they'd come and spend recess. [laughter] It was a lot of fun.

Everybody didn't get to go to high school, then?

No. It only lasted 4 years—the high school. And then I don't know what happened, why nobody went any more— whether their families moved away or what.

Where did you get the teacher? Was she a local lady?

F. Oh, no. No, she came from somewhere quite a ways away. Mrs. Lavoy was the teacher the next year, and she had to teach all subjects.

What did she teach?

Oh, we had our mathematics. And then, of course, they changed from regular to algebra. And English and grammar, history and typing, shorthand and home economics. We often did that at noon. We would each bring the ingredients—plan it the day before—and we'd cook our own hot dinner in the home economics class.

Did you have a kitchen in the school?

It was the heater, the heating stove down in the grade school. That was the home economics kitchen. It was fun. And to go farther back to when I was in the fifth grade, our science class was learning how to pan gold. That was fun, too. It was very nice to know. She showed us how to pick the gold up with the quicksilver out of the pan after washing the dirt out. And it's still fun to use it.

Let's get back to that home ec class. That kind of intrigues me. You brought all the ingredients with you?

Oh, of course. Oh, just the same as if it was a regular lunch, which it was. we'd decide the day before which of us was to bring which thing, and then we'd cook them on that heating stove [chuckles] and eat them in that room. We had shrimp salad; that was one of our favorites.. .canned shrimp. And fudge was one of our favorites. And then the other would be vegetables cooked in different ways. We never had time enough to cook any kind of meat, but it was really interesting. And the teachers enjoyed it so much; that made it pleasanter. They weren't disagreeable about anything, although they were both from cities.

You had 2 teachers, then, in high school?

Well, one each year. And, of course, there was a different teacher for the grade school. She had to know how to teach it all. But they did know.

Did you graduate from the high school?

I took the 2-year course. It was a commercial course. And then I wasn't there after that. Some of the students went on to school in Ely. Some of them just quit because it wasn't what they wanted, anyway.

The grade school...how large was that?

I believe there were about 15 students, but I don't remember exactly.

Children from the ranches nearby?

Yes. It was the relatives of the ones who were in high school.

How did the kids get to school?

Well, some of them rode horseback, some went in buggies, and some who were close enough walked. We kids had to rent a place near the school. [The ranch was too far away to commute.] We didn't board; we rented a housekeeping unit. And we had our horse in the corral. The place was 2 miles from school. Then, when the weather was bad, we had to walk anyhow because a storm come, and the horse headed for home. [laughter] I don't blame him.

If the children couldn't find a way to get to school without the car, they stayed home till they could decide to walk, because the parents weren't about to start up the car and take them to school. It wasn't done then. And when our horse learned to open the gate on snowy mornings, we walked through the deep

snow 2 miles. It didn't hurt us any. But he learned how to nuzzle that gate, and we'd get up some mornings when the snow was very bad, and he'd be gone—go back home to the ranch, 20 miles from the school.

Who stayed at this housekeeping unit near the school? You kids and your parents?

No, my sister and I. We rented a housekeeping room from a family that one year, and then the next year it was just a couple. They didn't have any children. We had a bedroom and the use of all the house except their bedroom. They were away most of the time. At that corral was where the horse learned to nuzzle the gate. It was the kind of latch that I have on my gate out there now. He being on the inside, he'd just push it open, and he'd be gone. [laughter]

How many grades were there in the school?

They had all 8, and the one teacher taught them all. That's what you did then. You taught all of them from the first grade on up to the eighth, if there was enough children, which there usually were. It made it interesting; they had to keep alert. That's the kind of a school I did my little bit of teaching in, too, where they had all grades.

The school building was made of logs. They were smooth, you know, shaped. But most of it was a log building. It was heated with wood-burning stoves. There was no gas out there then, no oil stoves. It was all wood. And those great big ones, you could cook on the top of them. It was very handy for that.

Was it one-room school, then?

Just the one room and then the stage, which we took for our one room for the high

school. That's where we had our community dances, too. And everybody who would behave was welcome. It didn't matter whether you were 2 months or 90 years; if you behaved yourself, you were welcome! They made coffee on a campfire Out in the yard in a great big can. Of course, we all took food, and we ate at midnight. We had live music, of course. I chorded on the organ for the accompaniment for the violin. It was really fun. Of course, there were others that did some of it.

Was the organ in the school?

Yes. It was in the school. It was part of the other school, I think, because that's where it was. Of course, they had it there for the school programs and music lessons. It was all just a nice community arrangement.

Who played the violin?

There were different men around the neighborhood who played the violin.

Did people usually play musical instruments?

Oh, yes. We liked it much better than the records on the phonographs, as we called them then. And, oh, we never had one of those at the school. Somebody'd bring their violin, and the organ was already there. There was always one of us that could do the chording for accompaniment. We changed off so we could both dance. Everything had to be stacked in a corner of the high school building [chuckling]— the high school room. And they had their school programs, of course, at Christmas and Easter and all those.

How did you get the floor smooth enough to dance?

Put wax on it. I thought it was much better than cornmeal. Sometimes they put cornmeal on just to smooth it off first, and then they would sprinkle wax on it. And sometimes we danced without it; you learn to pick up your feet when the floor isn't slick.

Did a lot of people come? Whole families?

Oh, yes. The whole families would go. You put the babies in a place they fixed for them up in a corner, and somebody would listen for them while the others danced. Then the grandparents would come there. The older men liked to dance if they could find anybody that knew their dancing. And I was one that did; my parents taught me. I could do the old-fashioned dances or the modern ones! [chuckling]

What kind of old-fashioned dances did you do?

Well, there was the schottische and the Spanish waltz. And then there was one or 2 others that were special steps. One of the older men said, "You can glide, and you can twirl; you can just do anything!" None of the other girls had learned them; their parents hadn't taught them. But I learned them from my dad and my uncle.

How often did you have these dances?

About every 2 weeks during high school. Of course, during the summer there was seldom a dance. Just something special— maybe Fourth of July. But we went whenever we had them. And then sometimes we'd dance in somebody's home in the weeks in between—if we didn't go home. We often went home [to the ranch] on Friday night.

Were there refreshments?

Oh, yes. Cakes and pies and sandwiches and salads, fruit. It was potluck. And then the hot coffee to go with it. And they tried to get me to drink coffee. If I drank coffee, I'd get so sleepy I could hardly dance! [laughter]

Worked the wrong way with you, didn't it?

Yes, sure did. Maybe the heat of the hot water in it. A drink of cold water with my snack, why, that was all right.

We danced till daylight. The dances were usually on Friday. And then sometimes those that didn't live there wouldn't go home after the dance. If we were to go home that weekend, we'd leave about sunup and go back home, get to work. We never got to miss a day's work. My dad told us like his father told him—he says, “You can dance all night if you want to, but you can do your work the next day.”

What other kind of community entertainment or projects did you have?

An occasional picnic. And once in a long while there'd be a church meeting. There was no church, but sometimes a group would decide to get together on Sunday for services, and have a picnic then, too, wherever there was a nice shady place where the wind didn't blow too much. Some of those ranches had fields with a lot of grass and had trees. That's where we would go. But the dancing was the main thing. Everybody that could walk learned to dance! Kept on as long as they could walk! [laughter]

You had no church buildings in your community?

No, there was no church buildings. The ranches were big enough ranches so the houses weren't close. And we'd just go to

somebody's house for that. Didn't matter what our church was, ordinarily. We'd all go there and have the services together.

Most of the people, I take it, then, were Protestant.

No, I wouldn't take it. [laughter] It was mixed. Catholics, Mormons, just everything that happened to be there, they'd get together and have prayers and singing and talk. And it didn't matter if you didn't belong to any church. You'd go there and enjoy it. It was just a religious get-together. There would be singing whether there was music or not, because they all had about the same songs. If they didn't, why, we'd sing theirs and then ours.

In summertime, of course, we stayed home and worked nearly all the time and didn't go anywhere except Fourth of July.

Oh, so then these services would be in the winter?

As soon as the weather was good. I don't remember more than one that was actually in summertime. But in the spring and the fall, when the weather was fairly good... there's no use going out and catching cold.

Once in a while we'd go pine nutting, when they hauled wood from the mountains for their use at the home. Sometimes we'd pack extra food and go with them, and we'd gather pine nuts while they were gathering wood. It was a busy life, but it was interesting.

What kind of chores did you do?

All the way from cooking and scrubbing clothes and floors and tending garden and milking cows, carrying feed to the pigs, pitching hay and helping tend the babies and

sewing, quilting and all that. We learned to do all of it— things that we would need. And I've used them a lot since, too. No washing machines at first, either. You had a tub and a washboard, and you carried the water in in buckets. We were some of the very modern people; we had a sink to run the water Out part of the time! My folks were very modern for then.

You did the washing inside, then?

In winter, yes. Oh, it was freezing cold in winter. In winter we did. Then the summertime, we had our tubs out on the porch. Heated the water in a boiler on the stove, and then you carried back out again. We didn't have Cold Power detergent then, or we wouldn't have had to heat so much water!

What kind of soap did you use?

Homemade soap mostly. And then later we got to buying White King and Fels Naptha. The Fels Naptha, you could use much cooler water. I used that after I was married, when we were going around where there was no good place to heat water—just lukewarm water and the Fels Naptha, I could do the family wash. And then later they got washing machines with motors on them, so you didn't have to pull the handle to make the thing work. And we changed from the flatirons on the stove—you heat them; you pick up the hot one, put the cool one back on. Then we changed to a charcoal one was the first one. It heated with charcoal in it. You didn't have to put that on the stove. Of course, now they have electric.

That was considered a real innovation, wasn't it?

That *was*. There were few of them around there. They saw it advertised in one of the catalogs. I don't know whether it was Sears or Wards or some of those. And so she bought one. Anything good like that, that they thought would make the work easier, they got. Of course, we all worked all the time—we should've had a few things. And we did. We had them.

As to bathrooms, we had a bathroom, but that's all it was. There was no plumbing, except to run the water out. But we had the tub, and we were so modern we had 2 outhouses—one for the men and boys and one for the women and girls. And when a hired man went to the women's by mistake, Dad told him, "Don't go in there again. That's for the women only."

What was the tub made of?

Zinc, they called it, and then, of course, a wood frame. It was big enough to sit 3 toddlers in at one time with their feet out straight and bathing! That's the way we bathed! [laughter]

How often did you bathe?

Oh, 2 or 3 times a week when we were little. Of course, when we were tiny, it was every day. And then we got to 2 or 3 times a week. Then they used the bathroom for a storeroom for a long time, so we had to use washtubs. Then Mother said, "Enough of that." So she cut a door from the kitchen to the bathroom. You had to go through the outside porch, a screen porch, from the dining room to the bathroom. And so she cut a doorway, and then we used the bathroom after that. Had a heating stove in there. And she thought that was enough of that business—the washtub stuff.

That was a real innovation, though, wasn't it, to have a tub in the house like that?

We were one of the few that did. I think people kind of laughed at the idea—was one reason they quit using it for a long time; they didn't like to be made fun of. A bathtub? That you can sit down in and stretch your feet out or lie down in?

What did people use, usually?

Washtubs, if you weren't too fat. If you got too fat, you had to put your feet on the floor and just sit in it. I never got that big. [laughter] I could always squat in it—you know, like you sit on the ground with your feet in front of you—and bathe by the heating stove. Usually in the living room we'd had a heating stove. Of course, there was always somebody in the kitchen. And we had a heating stove in one of the bedrooms, and still we'd almost freeze if you dared stick your nose out.

What kinds of games or fun did you have as a youngster on the ranch?

We could coast in wintertime. Had a homemade sled, and coast from the hill up in front of the house down.... If we'd had one of the modern sleds, we'd've gone clear across the field and maybe gone into the pond, but the sled was made of barrel staves with boards nailed on it. My dad made it. The hill was steep. On that steep a hill with a fine runner on it, we'd have gone through the fences and been injured. It went almost to the house, and that was far enough. It wasn't so far to pull it back up, either. Then when it did tip over, it was fun; it wasn't going too fast. We never were injured from it.

We also skated on the ice without skates. Skates would have been too dangerous. We skated just like you dance on a slick floor. Pull up and start running and pull up one foot and just scoot along on the other one! [laughter] All those things.

Then sometimes parents would let you slide down the haystack for fun, but mine didn't go for that. They said the hay wasn't much good if too many people walked on it. But they let us try each thing like that, and a hay ride just to see what fun it was. And it was fun—unless somebody objected to you having the best seat in the hay wagon.

What was the best seat in the hay wagon?

It's a matter of opinion. Some thought if you sat at the back and hung your feet over. I thought if you sat back where you wouldn't fall out. [laughter] Some wanted to sit on top of the hay. It was just a matter of opinion. Of course, the drivers thought they were losing out because they had to sit up in the seat and drive, but they could change off.

Did you have hay rides often?

No. It was a treat. And horseback riding was a treat for us girls. The men rode till they were tired of it after the cattle. They raised beef cattle. Feeders, they call them now, because they didn't usually sell them as beef. They sold to somebody who fattened them. But we'd ride.

There was one horse that just loved to run. Some of us were horseback riding one day, and that's the horse I was on. I was the only one in the group that knew that he just did that for fun, and he took off and you couldn't stop him. I didn't try. My young man friend was frightened. He tried to catch up with that horse to stop him. When the horse got through running, he slowed down. He didn't see why I wasn't frightened. Well, I knew the horse. He was sure-footed, and, oh, *he could run*. He'd wait till he *knew* that you didn't have a tight hold on the reins, and then he'd jerk his head and get the reins loose, and away he'd go.

Did you do much riding?

No, I did more scrubbing on the washboard than riding. Then we had to churn our own butter and all that, skim the milk, mix and bake our own bread. We seldom had to chop any wood; my dad kept a lot of it chopped, unless he was sick. He had a bad heart. Once in a while we'd get low on chopped wood. But he'd usually keep the wood boxes full.

You said that your dad made this sled for you. Did he make any other toys for you as a youngster?

I don't recall any. We bought the other toys. We'd send to the catalogs—Sears and Wards. There's one or 2 others, I think, they had catalogs from. So we bought the wagons. Of course, he couldn't have made a good wagon without wheels because he didn't have anything to make them quite round. And he used to make the ropes for their use around the farm. He made them out of horsehair. Instead of cutting the horses' tails, they would pull a hair at a time, you know, so it wouldn't annoy the horse too much, and save those long hairs. And he had a machine made and he could pedal and work something like a spinning wheel. And he could sit down there and tread that and feed the hair into it, and it would wind a tight rope. I tried to find that machine last time I visited the ranch. This is long after he was gone. And they didn't even know what had become of it. I'd like to know how that was fixed. I knew then how the wires were arranged. And he just put that in there and made ropes out of it. And then they got to buying the hair ropes. Not hair, but grass ropes, as they call them.

What kind of cattle did your father have?

They were Durham and white face, mostly—the beef kind. Their one ranch was whatever the homestead rights were at that time, and then he bought ranches of others who would go broke at whatever they were doing. They didn't stay and work all the time like we did. And then they would sell out and move away, and he'd buy their ranches.

Did people come and go rather regularly?

Well, they'd stay a few years, some of them only a couple of years. It depended upon how long they could get along without having to get down to hard work. Find out they'd have to work or leave, and especially if they were buying it all on credit, which some of them did—the cattle and the land. And after a while, he sent the down payment, and then they'd have to move!

With a family with a number of children, I wonder how you were disciplined.

When we were in the house, our mother gave us the commands. And if we thought she was too far off, she reached for Father's razor strop, and we decided then she was right. [laughter] Oh, in a hurry after one little flick of that, then we knew she was right—when she just reached for it. It was hanging in the kitchen. Anybody could see it; it was there purposely.

Out in the yard, if we did something like trying to get to where Papa was to talk to him, and we stepped on one of his vines, he would pull off a glove and throw it at us. And that was it. He spanked the boys a few times, but for us girls he'd just throw a glove. Oh, that was worse than a beating, I think! Heavens, you didn't move again after he threw a glove. You just stood perfectly still till he told you

just where to go. He'd say, "Look down at your feet." And back we'd go. We didn't turn around; we *backed* up.

It was so hard to grow anything there. And his watermelons were the prize. He'd be out there tending them, and we'd have a little free time, and run out and talk to Papa. And then years later, when my boy was just learning to walk good, we were visiting out there. Of course, he saw Grandpa out in the melons, and he wouldn't think about melons; he saw Grandpa. And he started out with his little arms out and I think I almost fainted—what would he do to that child? He put down his hoe, and he stepped across the vines, picked up the baby; he said, "He was only trying to get to me."

That's what happens when you're a grandfather.

Yes. But before, he was raising melons to feed all of us. That makes a difference.

Did he ever discipline you for anything else that you remember?

Well, there *wasn't* much else. We were given our rules, and we were good children about obeying. We weren't mean. We had our ornery spells, but Mother would see to it that we did what we were told in the house. And that's where most of it was done.

Then if you were disciplined, it usually concerned not doing your chores or something like that?

Just some little thing like that. She told me to go do it, and I didn't go. So when she flicked me with the razor strop, I went. [laughter] And then when my sister and I got in a fight one time, she tied us to the porch post, our hands behind us. Gave us a lecture about being mean to each other.

We were scratching, and so she tied us back to back to that post. And we stretched our arms to try to get our nails to claw each other's hands!

How old were you?

Oh, about 4 and 5. She had a soft cotton rope.

Did she leave you very long?

Oh, no. Just long enough to think about it. I guess she could see what we were thinking. She said, "Now, suppose she died? Wouldn't that be a relief?" And she could see what we were thinking, so she just...long enough to remind us to not scratch again.

Did your father ever spank you?

Oh, no. He never so much as paddled me. Just throw a glove. And once that glove did land on my foot, and I thought my leg was broken. [laughter] He'd throw it from across the yard, but that time I was too close, and it did land on my foot. Oh, that hurt terribly! It was a lightweight glove, but it was just the *idea* my dad had *touched* me.

Did he spank the boys?

Once in a long while.

With his hand?

Yes. He wasn't rough, violent.

A gentle man, and you had a good relationship with your father?

Yes. As far as we were allowed to in those days. You know, you mustn't go up and slap

Daddy on the arm and say anything. We would have loved to, and he would have loved it, too, but it hadn't become customary yet that you could be that familiar with an adult.

So you had a great deal of deference for your father?

Oh, we did, yes. I still have. And for Mother, but poor Mother—she had us all day. And Dad was away from the house nearly all day.

Working out in the field or out on the ranch...?

Yes, and tending to the cattle, sometimes riding all day. I rode one day; I would have loved to continue, and he would have loved it, too. He said a cowboy with years of experience couldn't have done a better job than I did riding after the cattle. But the brother who took my place in the house said, "Nothing doing." He said, "Oh, no, you don't." He couldn't keep up with my work in the house, and he wasn't going to try it again! [chuckling]

We each had our chores. My sister and I would take different days for different things in the house. We rotated. I would do the bedrooms one day and the kitchen and dining room floors the next day, and dishwashing the next day, and things like that. They made it as fair as it possibly could be. [laughter] As fair as housework and baby tending can be.

Tell me about the ranch house.

It was *very* new when I was born here—just finished the first 2 rooms. It was wood. There was an older house there that the family had lived on. My parents, and my older brother and my sister—they were just

toddlers—and his 2 sisters and the husband of one of them and *their* children, they had all lived in that one house, and he got 2 rooms of the new house built in time for me to be born. Had the midwife come out and stay. And then he'd add on a room, between hours of working out among the cattle and then the ranch work. One thing that made it miserable for Mother—because she liked the outdoor work, helping him—was with little ones, she had to stay in the house.

How many rooms did you have in the house finally?

Seven and the attic. It was all the one floor—a split-level. The 2 rooms were built first, and then it had steps up to the others because there's just a foothill which started this dreadful slope up.

I don't remember how often we did it, but we all learned to do wallpaper. And, of course, we papered the ceilings; they were muslin ceilings, just this bleached muslin. That's what ceilings used to be. There wasn't any of this wall board or ceiling board. They tacked muslin on the rafters. And you better get it tight, or you'd have a sagging ceiling. And then you try to paper over that, and it's not fitting. But we had ours nice and tight. Mother put it up. I didn't, of course; I had nothing to do with it.

The floor of the attic was above what was originally the pantry. It was boards, and then the muslin was under that on the rafters.

Then the attic didn't go above the whole house?

Oh, no. It was just that one room. We later made that into a kitchen.

So there was no insulation, really?

That was the insulation—the boards and then the shingles on top. It wasn't very much. It'd get awfully cold at nights—of course, we had a fire all day.

That's a real art to stretch that fabric that tightly.

It is. To have a nice, smooth, tight ceiling.

And your mother did that?

Oh, she did. She did wonderful things. She was almost a perfectionist in lots of things she did! And she did the painting, most of it, till we got big enough to learn how, and the woodwork.

Where did she learn to do that stretching?

I think it just came natural to her.

And that was the fashion?

Oh, yes, that's what all the houses were if they had a ceiling at all. They were muslin. And some could paper them; some didn't bother to do it. Every 2 or 3 years I think we papered the ceiling. That's where you get your stretching exercises. You stand up on the table, and you reach up there, paste the thing...! [laughter]

What kind of wallpaper did you have?

Sometimes it was a flowered design for the bedrooms, and more of a block design for the dining room.

Did you ever use newspaper like some of the old houses had?

The pantry was the only one that had the newspaper. We stopped and read it while we

were putting the groceries away. [laughter] We memorized those things, they were read so often!

Did you have electricity in the ranch house ever?

No. Not while I was out there. They have now, but they didn't have then. The first refrigerator was gas, and they had kerosene lamps. The meat, they didn't butcher until cold weather. And then they put it in the screen porch on the north side of the house, where it stayed frozen a good share of the time. And we had what we called a desert cooler. It's a cupboard, has a framework with shelves in it, and you put muslin, tight, over that, and then you put burlap over that. And on top it's a large tank the full width of the cupboard that has water in it, and strips of burlap hang over. That keeps the burlap and muslin cold...wet, and it's cold inside. We kept butter in there and everything like that. We couldn't keep anything that had to be frozen, but we kept it cold.

What about meat in the summertime, then?

They didn't butcher in the summertime. We ate chicken. Once in a while they could catch some fish, but we didn't try to keep any meat in the summertime; it'd be useless. They'd put the pork in strong salt water in winter, and we'd hurry and get that used up before warm weather because there was no chance to keep it.

What kind of things did your mother cook?

Oh, we cooked different kinds of meat, and we had potatoes and.... In the summertime we had our vegetables—turnips and all those

things and cabbage. We had a garden right by the house.

Who tended that?

We all did. That was one of our first outdoor chores, helping to irrigate and pull weeds and carry in kindling. And, of course, we had a potato patch farther away—the corn, and things like that.

We dried corn for winter. We'd boil more than was needed for a meal, and then the leftover ears of it, just after we'd finish the dinner, we would cut those with a sharp knife. Cut the kernels off of the ear and then put it in a sunny place on a clean, white cloth and cover it with a screen and it'd dry. We dried fruit that way, too. That was easier than spending any special day at it—just put some extra ears in the big kettle, and fix those for winter.

And then did you dry it outside in the sun?

Oh, yes, out in the sunlight on the porch of the 2 first rooms; that was a sloping roof. Then we could reach out through the attic window and put the things out there on the roof, and nothing could get to it. The birds couldn't because of the screen. It was a lot of work, but it was really worth it.

How did you prepare the corn in the wintertime when you wanted to eat it?

We put it in some hot water and simmered it just a little bit for it to swell, and then put some milk and butter and salt and pepper in it.

After that was dried on the roof did you store that in bags or in cans?

No, in bags, so it'd get some little bit of air to it. You know we used to get things in

muslin sacks instead of in cans and paper bags; anything like that—dried fruit—because it does need a little air. And corn, things like that, grow mold sometimes if they don't get enough air. Even if they're in a dry place they'll seem to get enough moisture to mold.

What else did you prepare for winter consumption?

Dried fruit. Apples mostly; sometimes prunes. We had to buy them at Currant Creek. They had orchards up there. We didn't have any fruit at the ranch until much later. And then we dried meat. That was done the last butchering before the hot weather clearly came; we'd dry the meat—we called it jerky. We had special lines for that. Cut it up fine, put it out there. We could use that all the year around. That provided us with some meat. And once in a while they'd kill a jackrabbit before they became diseased.

What else did you have for winter consumption?

The regular vegetables—carrots and things like that. We had a root cellar. And Father grew Jerusalem artichokes. They aren't these white potato-looking things that you get now. They were a red-purple, and oh, they were so good and clear white inside—snow white! They were better flavored than these that we get in the stores—these that look like potatoes, you know. One of the highlights of the fall was when he would bring the artichokes in to put them in the root cellar. Of course, we could eat all we wanted to that day. We never cooked them. That was one of our raw foods that we *could* keep.

Then he would buy apples by the half ton, and then a ton later as we got older. He had a special brick building for that with bins

inside. They had to be handled carefully; you don't bruise an apple and try to keep it. So he'd go and pick them himself; he wouldn't let anybody help him. He had a quilt and a sheet in the bottom of his wagon, and he'd put them in there carefully, and he'd unload them the same way and put them all in the bins. And, oh, they'd keep until about May. And then we'd have to finish them up in applesauce. [chuckles] Sometimes we would dry the apples on the roof.

We bought beans because no one had time to grow them and then shell them out and all—blow all the dust out. So we'd buy those from a neighbor. Yes, we ate beans. Sometimes we had split peas. And then we'd buy canned food so we'd have more fruit. There wasn't much fruit to be had, so Mother would buy canned fruit. We were as well fed as you *could* be out there.

We had milk cows. Made our own butter. See, we milked those cows, skimmed the cream off.... We had several cows. There was always some of them fresh. When the men were going to be away we did the milking, too. That was an interesting change.

We made our own bread. Of course, we had to buy the flour. Sometimes we'd buy wheat and grind it so we would have the whole wheat—a hand grinder.

How often did you bake?

Depend upon how much the people ate! [laughter] I'd say an average of about 3 times a week. Sometimes oftener, and then sometimes it'd only be twice in one week, depending on how many were home and how much company there was. Cowboys'd stop in, and they ate hearty.

Did you have a lot of drop-in company?

No. Most of it was just the cowboys that were riding after somebody's cattle and stop in there for a meal.

And in the West you could always stop in and get a meal, couldn't you?

Yes. The only thing you were warned about—this is just traditional—don't eat at the enemy's table.

What do you mean by that?

Well, haven't you ever heard about a person dying of food poisoning after they left? [laughter] That was the idea. But they were warned not to eat at an enemy's table. So you considered a person felt friendly if they'd come in expecting a meal. [laughter] And they did. The way they ate they must have been friendly. It was riding on horseback a long ways; they were hungry when they'd get there. Once in a long while there'd be a woman to visit with. But they were busy in their homes.

Was it lonely for women?

It was for my mother, *very* lonely. In winter the schoolteacher would usually board with us, and that gave her a woman to visit with evenings and mornings. But it was very lonely. She had moved from one of the biggest towns in the state, then to go out there to the ranch where she hardly ever saw a woman. But having a teacher there, if it was a congenial one, was very nice. Of course, we went to school, and then we had other girls to talk to. I never thought about being lonely.

Your mother came from what city?

She came from Belmont. That was the county seat. It was a busy place then; that's

when it was mining. They had dances and all the various get-togethers. She and Papa both liked that, but they didn't want to give up everything he'd earned. I think we'd all have been better off if he had—just let the neighbors steal it all. I do really.

He had a blacksmith shop and livery stable in Belmont. That's what he was supporting the first part of his family with before he moved back to the ranch. And if we'd stayed there, we would each have gotten into something. I think it would have been better for the family in general.

It's terrible for a woman to be there at home alone. She never knew if he'd come home or if somebody'd shoot him. You know, there's lots of cattle rustling. And when he'd leave in the morning, she didn't know if he'd come home or not. It was a hard life.

One of the cattle rustlers brought 2 pals with him. They cut the fence of the pasture that the house was in, went in there and shot an animal and were skinning it when my father went out. That was when I was a baby. He went out with his gun; they were facing each other, and his pals—one standing in back of Papa and the other just general guard. Mother put us babies where we'd be safe and got her loaded rifle, went out and stood in back of him, and then the other one got in back of her. I guess the boss decided no matter what happened, if one shot was fired he was sure to be killed because there were 2 guns back of him and 2 in front of him. So he put his gun down. But they didn't let him take the beef.

You mentioned earlier in the interview having a number of catalogs. I suppose it was a great event when the catalog came.

Yes, it was. The "wish books." That's where we bought our clothes—what we didn't make; we made quite a lot of them.

And you bought the fabric from the catalog?

Yes. And Mother taught us how to cut patterns and sew. I nearly always have known how to make patterns, even without buying one—I'd make my own. It was easier for me than to bother with the ones they sent. But we bought some ready-made dresses. Some we made ourselves, made our quilts and things like that.

Did you cut each other's hair and do things like that?

Oh, of course. When anyone's hair was cut, the boys were the only ones that had their hair cut. We had to keep ours long. We could trim the ends, but we'd do that for each other. Mine was long enough to sit on the ends of it.

What about sickness? You were out pretty far from doctors.

Oh, yes. If there was anything very serious that Mother didn't know how to take care of, Father would hurry to the place where they had the nearest car, hire them to go and get a doctor. People couldn't afford to run a car just as a favor. He never *asked* if they wanted the money; he simply paid them a good amount and they went. He needed the doctor as soon as they could get her there.

Did you ever have any real emergencies?

Well, when I had pneumonia. There was the one time I was 8 years old. They didn't know why I didn't get up that morning; I couldn't even turn my head. He came in to see why I wouldn't get out of the bed. He took one look at me, spoke to me, and I blabbed some... neither he nor I ever knew what I said, but he took one look at my eyes and out he went.

He got the buggy team and went to Currant Creek. It was about 20 miles. There was a woman there that would go as a nurse when she was needed. lie hired somebody with a car to go to Preston, over in White Pine County, and get the woman doctor, and then Mary, the nurse, went home with him in the buggy to be there. Then they brought the doctor on down.

Dr. Windows was the only doctor anywhere near. She was a good one. They needed a doctor out in that area. This is what I was told: she was interested in medicine, so the neighbors asked her if she would go to school and learn to be a doctor—put in her time—if they put up the money to pay the cost. Then she was to come back there and be the doctor for the whole community. So she did. All the neighbors in that town put up the money, and she went to school and came back with all her needed papers. She had her home there and raised *her* family, and she was the doctor for all around there.

Where did she go to school? Do you remember?

Oh, I don't know. No, I was just a little girl at the time she was brought out there. I was 8 years old when she came out there.

Do you know how long Dr. Windows practiced in White Pine County?

Oh, for many years. No, I don't know how long.

She never left the community, then?

She did years and years afterwards. I think there were too few there for her to make a living, so she moved into Ely and I think just had the few that she felt like tending to. But she had kept her promise to all those, because

they had either moved away, or I think the older ones had all passed on. But she kept her promise; she was there for years. She gave them a doctor right in their hometown; it's a small town.

So Dr. Windows came all the way out to the ranch, then, to take care of you?

Yes. That was about 60 miles. Of course, she couldn't stay long. The next thing I knew after Papa went out, was that when I opened my eyes, they had a lamp lighted—it was sometime in the evening—and 3 women were at the foot of the bed: my mother and the nurse (Aunt Mary, as we called her) and this other one I found out was Or. Windows. And I heard her say, "I think it's pneumonia." I just wondered what it was, I guess! [laughter] The next morning she was gone, and Mary was at it again!

This Aunt Mary, was she also the midwife?

No, she wasn't a midwife, but she went for other things. In an emergency, she would have done what she could.

Who was the midwife, do you remember?

It was Margaret Taylor in Eureka. She used to come out there. She's the one my dad brought out for me. She'd come and stay 2 or 3 weeks...and took care of whatever babies there already were! [chuckling] They planned on it being a few days, to be sure, and she was there a few days while I was born. My little sister, Edna—13 months older—and my mother and she...and my dad would come over in the daytime to visit. I think he ate there, so he could visit with us. He and my brother, who was 2 1/2 years older than I, were in the other house where his sisters and their

families were living. And they would sleep over there because they only had the 2 little rooms built. One was a kitchen, and the other was the bedroom for the....

And there were other houses; there were other buildings there at the ranch?

One other. One other where Father's 2 sisters and their families lived. That's where they had all lived before he built those first 2 little rooms.

And what did the midwife do? Kind of cook and look after the new baby and...?

Oh, yes, she did all of that. Took care of those 2 rooms and my mother and the baby.

She was more than a midwife, then.

Oh, they were. I guess that's why they say "wife," because they did all that work! [laughter]

Do you remember how much she was paid?

I have no idea. I never asked. At that age I wasn't interested!

Well, were you a rather healthy family?

We were.

No broken legs that you'd have to...?

Oh, we did have, yes. We were kind enough to do most of that when we were in town. [laughter]

Really, you didn't have any accidents out on the ranch?

Oh, yes, we had a lot of them. But we just took that in like the day's cooking. If something happened—after we got a car—then they rushed us to town.

When my back was injured, we didn't go into town. I stayed there. And, oh, the agony of trying to get up in the morning. I'd have to roll myself onto the floor and then hand by hand by the bed rails to get to my feet. I was alone in a house north of the other ranches, cooking for the hay crew. (This is when I was 15.) It wasn't a big crew. And I could arrange the...they didn't have to see too much of how I tried to walk. I'd have everything on the table before they'd come in. I'd have to swing one leg way out.

How did you injure yourself?

A horse rolled on me. I was caught in the stirrup, and the horse fell. I never have recovered, because I wasn't taken to the doctor. At haying time...I just was taught I should keep still; that was what the thing was. Don't complain, just go on and do your work. So I did. If there'd been anybody in the house with me, I think there'd have been something done, but I was alone there. When they'd come in, I—"Oh, I'm all right."

You had gone to another ranch, then, to do the cooking?

Oh, no, it was just our own crew. That's after my father had bought these ranches. We'd go up to one ranch, cook till they took care of it all near there, and then we'd go to the upper ranch and cook. We'd take turns. My sister'd cook for....

You had several ranches, ultimately, didn't you, that your father had acquired?

Yes. Yes, he had it so that each of us could have a good piece of land. And when I wanted to go away to work, he said, "You stay here and help me build this up, and your share will be your wages." I would have been all right if I married something different from what I did, or if I had gone away to school, which I wanted to do. I wanted to be a teacher. At that time, what education I already had, 6 weeks at the university would have been enough. But I never was allowed enough of my money to go and do it.

Your father, then, kept the money that he would have paid you?

No, he didn't. It was someone else; and no, it wasn't banked for me. It was spent for things that I supposedly wanted and didn't. But he wasn't the one that did it. My sister and I *did not* have control of our money. All the menfolks did, but we didn't. And we learned to say, "Yes," when they said, "Well, now you want this," and it was spent. But my father was not the one who did it.

Who controlled it?

Let's not say. Let's not tell [chuckles] It was somebody there that had a hand in it. And so we often didn't even see our money. But I had enough coming, I could have gone to school. And instead it was loaned out to somebody.

Did you have a regular job there at the ranch, for which you were paid?

Oh, we just worked. We just did the work; we worked all day, nearly every day. And we had a share in the cattle. That was to be our spending money; only my sister and I couldn't have ours.

Did the boys get theirs?

They got theirs, yes. But when you have too many bosses there...and in those days girls didn't need anything but a place to sleep and a house dress and a pair of shoes [chuckling]. That's the general idea. I didn't know why we didn't need anything.

Did you talk to your father about wanting to be a teacher?

No. No use. I never got to talk to my father without other people there.

Did you ever confide in your mother about your ambitions?

My mother knew it. And I don't know why she couldn't arrange for me to have my money. She and I talked about it—getting *my* money for me to go. But we never got it. Somebody else had control of it. Yes, we talked about it, but we just never got it.

Was she sympathetic about your ambitions?

Well, I guess she was because she was the one that suggested that maybe I could get my money. But we couldn't get it; somebody else had it. So I didn't get that.

Did your mother have an opportunity for an education?

She was a teacher. She taught us one year for pay when they couldn't get another teacher. She said that was good, getting paid to take care of your own children. We had regular classes in our living room. We'd quit our morning work in time to clean up, put on our school clothes and sit down at the desk; it was just like being in school.

Any other kids from the neighboring ranches come?

There weren't any others that year. That's how it happened. We were enough to keep a school, but they couldn't get a teacher, so.... I'm glad they couldn't. It was a little extra income.

What kind of training did your mother have?

Well, what they had then was they went through so many books—they didn't call them grades. She went through all the books, then took the teacher's examination.

Now, I've seen some of those early examinations, and I tell you the truth, I would hate to take them.

They were rough, weren't they?

They really were rough, yes.

She would have had her certificate a year earlier, but she was the only one that passed, and they said somebody must have cheated.

Was this in Belmont?

Yes. One of her relatives was on the school board, and they said there must have been some cheating because of favoritism. So she had to wait another year to get it.

Were books important in your family?

Oh, yes. We had books, and we read. Whenever we had a half hour, if we didn't *have* to be doing something else, we'd read. We had various kinds. From the history books and all different things like that. And, of course, we had the books on different professions, and

we read them. And then some were just good fiction.

Did you read novels and things like that?

Oh, I didn't read very many. There was one book that was written in Scotch, and Mother said, "There's no use taking a bookshelf space for that any longer; nobody can read it."

I said, "I can!"

"OK."

I read it and told her what was in it.

Do you remember what the book was?

It was just kind of a family life deal. Just a nice story of a family. But I could read it. I don't think I could now, but I could then. We're *not* part Scotch.

Did any of your brothers or sisters go off and get more schooling, like you would have liked to have done?

My sister got the trip to the university in Reno. She didn't care anything about it, and that's one of the crazy things about people. Somehow they could manage to afford to send her, and she didn't care. They told her just have fun. And she did. She didn't want to study.

Did she become certificated?

No, she didn't want it! She didn't care for school. This is one of the crazy things in life.

So what happened to her?

She stayed home like I did and worked until each one got married. That's what everybody did. My younger brothers went away to school—the 2 younger ones. I think they went to Reno awhile and then Ely awhile

and then in Reno, and then somewhere in California, I think. I don't even remember. I was gone then, so I don't know. But they got their good education. One of them is an accountant—the youngest one. And he married an accountant, and their daughter is an accountant. Lot of accounting around there! [laughter] My oldest brother didn't want to go any further. He said he'd have to give up the life's work that he wanted; he wanted the cattle business. And my dad couldn't do all the work alone; he said, "Well, if you all want to go to school, we'll sell Out, and we'll move to where you *can* go to school." My brother couldn't have that because that was the business he wanted.

But they wouldn't do that for a daughter?

No. That's the way it was. Lots of people are that way. My dad was English, but that wasn't all his idea.

It's certainly different with the women's lib today, isn't it?

Oh, *isn't* it? If my mother was young now, boy, the things she would get to do! [laughter] She was born 40 years too soon. She had the ideas, and she could have done them, but you can't when you're washing diapers and scrubbing floors the whole day.

When my mother was 2 years old, I guess, her dad died, and that left her mother with 7 children. Some of the babies had died, too. Had to have a boardinghouse, and. - .but she kept them where there was a school. She kept them in Belmont in the wintertime; then she moved to a ranch in the toll station in summer. Raised the vegetables in summer to take home with them for winter.

The toll station was on a toll road through Belmont...to one of those towns, anyway. I don't remember which one. But the people

that owned the road gave her part of the toll for collecting it. My mother's mother, my grandma, my Irish grandmother. Five-foot-two, eyes of blue, and spirited enough to raise a family alone.

And those women were innovative, weren't they?

Oh, I'll say they were. And she still had a sense of humor when I met her. She was one of the lights of my life.

What was her name?

Grace McCann. Grace McCann *shouldn't* be forgotten. She was a darling to me. She loved me, and I loved her. And when I *did* have to have a spanking [by my mother I, she would just... like this,, waiting for it to get over with—hands clenched, and her eyes full of tears, waiting for it to be over with. And she'd wait the length of time that they required before touching me. And then. she'd pick me up and kiss me.

Did she live close by so that you could see her often?

They took turns of her living with them. In those days, you know, the woman didn't have anything if other people could spend it. She sold the little ranch she had when she was no longer able to work. She would live with my parents for a while and then with other members of the family—her youngest son awhile, and then the oldest one, then her other daughter.

It's kind of sad, isn't it, not to have a place of your own?

It was...to have no home of your own. Stay about 6 months, maybe a year. Then

move to the other one, so nobody'd get tired of it. And she was such a help, too. You know, I put out of my mind those times when she would move because it was an unhappy time. I don't remember her ever leaving. I purposely wouldn't face it.

I used to sleep with her, and she'd tell me things about the past, her life. And things that some of the others would make fun of her for, she could tell me. I was very special with my grandmother. I was one of the specials. There were some in the other families, too. She died in our home of pneumonia when she was 86.

So the people in your family are really long-lived, aren't they?

Yes. And my mother was 86. She had set for herself the same age as her mother, and she was within a day or 2 of being exactly the same age.

Where are they both buried?

My mother was buried here in Tonopah in the...not the very old cemetery and not the very new; it's the one in between. She and my grandmother and my Uncle Joe were in the medium one, I would call it.

And your Grandmother McCann is buried here, too?

Yes, she's there, too. They're in the same row. My dad was buried in Ely. He always wanted to be under a weeping willow tree, and there's no weeping willow trees in Tonopah. So she bought him a lot there.

Your mother did?

Yes.

So your father predeceased your mother, then?

Oh, yes, by several years. And she said take our choice about where to put her. But I could tell by the longing looks that she had that plot that she had bought for herself beside her brother, that's where she wanted to be. got bawled out for that. "Why wasn't she taken to Ely?"

I said, "She didn't want to. She wanted to be in Tonopah." It was her grief her last days that she wouldn't be brought back to Tonopah. I thought we could bring her back alive, but we didn't succeed. And she wanted Tonopah.

How many, brothers and sisters did you have?

I had 4 brothers and one sister. Two of the brothers are still living.

[Years ago large families made life difficult for the women, but you] have to give them credit. They tried to prevent it without abortions. They didn't believe in abortions, but they had those different "recipes," they called them then.

Can you remember what any of these contraceptive recipes were?

I never saw them. The ones I had I don't remember now what was in them.

Were they things that you took?

No. You inserted them. One of my aunts said she had 3 recipes, and she had a baby to show for every one of them. So that showed how much good they were! [laughter] Each of their parents had had 9 children. And they thought that was too many. They thought 2 was enough, but we just kept a-coming. [laughter]

The recipe didn't work!

No. No, that was it. Mother had some things there; I didn't snoop enough to see what they were, but when I'd be tidying the room sometimes, open the drawer to put something in, and I'd see a gadget there. I don't know what they are. No, they did. . .because they wanted to be able to take good care of what they had and they wanted a little time for fun. Go out and dance if that's what they liked to do. They noticed that their mothers didn't, with 9 children.

What other medicinal recipes do you remember that your mother used?

Well, for colds and anything around the lungs it was olive oil and turpentine. You just mix it together and rub it on your chest and all around your neck and under your arms. (You know, that absorbs a lot.) We put a cloth around our throats, and put us to bed to rest. And then, of course, for the stomach they had their different things. I don't even remember. They weren't anything very strong—something that's mild. For cramps they sometimes had you make a ginger.

That's for girls and their menstrual periods?

Yes. Well, Mother would fix it; she'd just put 2 drops in a cup of hot water. She was gone once, and I got some awful cramps, and I read the instructions—it said a teaspoonful. I drank it and fell behind the trunk. You know, it's nearly all alcohol. And even one teaspoonful for a child in hot water...! [laughter] I told her about it after she came back. She said, "Oh, I only put 2 drops!" [laughter]

Oh, yes, we had smallpox, and that's another medication. Sidney Holloway, a Texas cowboy who worked on our ranch, had been

to a dance somewhere across the other side of the mountain, and he didn't know the girl he danced with had smallpox. He thought it was just teenage pimples. He danced with her over there, and it was so far, and he wasn't feeling good. So he stayed overnight; of course, that was sleeping in one of the beds. He ate at the table with us, and we all took down with smallpox.

Well, you must have had a mild case because you don't have any marks from it.

Now, how do you know how many marks are between my toes?

Well, I'm looking at your face, and that's probably the most important thing for a lady.

I didn't have *any* on my face. They were on my feet, between my toes. And my father was just a mess. Oh, we all got it. But the doctor said to take a glass of warm water and put 2 or 3 drops of carbolic acid in it and have us drink one glass each morning. That was all for the day. That was it—that and rest, you know, and have fruit juices and not eat heavy foods. Papa didn't have to worry; he was too sick to eat, anyway. And my sister and brother didn't like it; it was nasty. And they [imitates getting sick when taking the medicine]. They saw me just drink mine down, and they said, "Do you like it?"

I said, "Yes."

"Well, here."

So I was getting 2 1/2 glasses a day; that's why I didn't get very bad, I guess. I drank mine, and they'd drink about a half glass while Mother was watching them. And then that'd give me 2 glasses of it. One day Mother turned around. I had my empty glass in my hand and was drinking out of one, and my brother's hand was empty.

Was your house quarantined? Did you have any signs up?

Oh, there was nobody there to do any quarantine. It didn't matter, because there was nobody close enough to enforce it.

You said a while ago that cowboys sometimes stopped around.

Well, that's their tough luck if they stopped in! [laughter] Anybody came was told that we had smallpox. And if they didn't leave, it was their own fault.

When did you leave the ranch?

When I was 20. I married Sidney Holloway, who worked on my father's ranch. He was a bronco buster, mostly. He'd break their horses; he worked all around there. We went to Ely, and then we went to Los Angeles. He was the one with itchy feet. He couldn't stay put. We could go the same trails year after year. Same places.

Working cattle?

No, just any kind of job. He worked in mines. He liked to chop wood, so he'd haul cordwood and sell it. Then he'd work on a ranch awhile. Just anything...he took work on the highway, highway construction, but he wouldn't stay put.

Did you have children?

Yes. We had 4. You try to raise babies in a car.

It's very hard....

It's horrible. Sometimes it was an open car—no top. You hold the babies, and the

wind blowing. You try to nurse them; they get colic, and you catch cold. It's been a long time ago, 54 years ago.

I take it that you didn't stay married, then, to Mr. ...

No, no. Seventeen years, plus, was plenty. I can stay in my home now. [chuckles]

Is he dead now?

Oh, yes, he's been dead a long, long time. Buried in Las Vegas. Yes, that's enough. You don't any more than get the kids' clothes unpacked and put in shelves until he's ready to move. Oh, it was horrible. I developed a badly damaged heart, among other things.

ELSIE HUMPHREY: LIFE ON A REESE RIVER RANCH, 1903-1915 MANHATTAN AND TONOPAH, 1920-1945

Elizabeth Patrick: Where were you born, Mrs. Humphrey?

Elsie Humphrey: On a Reese River ranch in Nye County, Nevada, 22 August 1903.

How long had your family been on the Reese River?

Well, all of Grandpa's children were born and raised there on the Reese River. I wouldn't know what year it was that they came there.

As long as you can remember, then, the family has been there?

Yes.

And who was your grandfather?

Thomas Jefferson Bell.

Was that your maternal or paternal grandfather?

Paternal.

How many children were in your family?

There's 3 sisters by my mother's first marriage, and then she had 3 others—2 girls and a boy. So there was 6 of us. I think another girl was born, but she died when she was real young.

How long did you live at the ranch?

I lived at the ranch until I went away to Reno to high school. So that was about 1915.

Where did you go to school before that time?

I went to the Reese River School—just a little school on the Reese River, Out of the ranch about 6 miles. It was just a little sort of red and white rock school, just one big room, all by itself. It was just an ordinary rural school—with the teacher's desk and then kids' desks and the bookshelves, things like that, and then the stove.

A large stove?

Oh, yes, a large stove.

Did you need it very much?

Yes, we surely did; in the winter it got real cold.

Is Reese River very cold country?

Pretty cold. It's pretty high. Used to have a lot of snow.

A blackboard in the school?

Yes, there was a blackboard.

Did you use paper or slates or...?

We used paper.

Who took care of that fire in the stove?

I guess the teacher did most of it. Of course, wood was chopped and brought in. She kept the fire going, I think.

Did you have an outside toilet?

Yes, we did.

What about water?

We didn't have water there, either. We had to bring our water for drinking.

How did you get it there?

I don't even remember that, but we must have had water there some way or other. We used to come by horseback, and we didn't

carry water then. I don't remember how we got the water. There was water there.

Each one of you kids came on horse?

Yes, about 6 miles.

Where did you put the horse when you got to school?

We just had a tie-up hitch, I guess you'd call it, where you tied them up.

On the average, how many kids would you say were at the school?

Oh, not over 10, I don't think, at the most. Ten, I think—a few Indians and....

Do you remember the names of any of the youngsters who went to school with you?

A couple of the Stevens boys went to school there, but I don't remember the Indians' names.

Where did those Indian kids come from?

Well, they stayed on the ranches; they lived on the different ranches. And some of them lived at the Bell ranch where we lived.

Would you say the Indian students were successful students? Or how did they do in school?

Well, they were real good mostly in writing and drawing and mathematics, but they weren't very good at English or anything that they had to think very....

Did you play with the Indian children?

Oh, yes.

You knew them well?

Yes.

Can you remember any of the teachers who taught at the Reese River School?

Mrs. Rita Derringer was there the first 4 years. And...gee, I don't...Claire Bell, I think, taught. She was an aunt of mine. But I can't think of the other teachers.

What kind of teachers would you say they were?

Oh, Mrs. Rita Derringer was a real good teacher, I thought. She just seemed to take an interest and really knew what she was doing. And one teacher we had, I know, didn't know anything. I was in the eighth grade, and she... we didn't even have English that year. She didn't even give me English. Don't know how I passed. I can't think of her name. She was a lady from San Francisco; I think she was a dancer. I don't know how they got her up there, teaching.

How did they get teachers there?

They'd just send in their applications, and they'd just pick from the ones they thought were the best.

Who did the picking?

The school trustees.

Would you have any way of knowing how much those teachers earned?

Well, I don't know. I imagine around \$100 a month, because I know my first year I

got \$135 and the second year \$150, so it was probably about the same.

Where did the teachers live?

They usually stayed at the Bell ranch, at our home.

Did they have a room or more than a room of their Own?

No, just a room.

Did they eat at the ranch?

Yes.

Did they have to pay for that, or was that part of their salary?

That was probably taken out of their salary, I think. Or else they paid them the salary, and then they paid them so much for board and room. I know mine was \$35 the first year and \$50 the second, board and room.

So they ate meals with the family?

Yes.

What did you kids think about having the schoolteacher around all the time?

Oh, I guess we enjoyed it, as I remember. I think we enjoyed having her.

What kind of discipline did you have at school? Did the teacher ever spank the youngsters, or was that not allowed?

I don't remember any of them ever being spanked.

Well, you probably knew her very well, and she knew you very well, so it was sort of among friends, maybe. What did you do for pleasure and fun?

Oh, we just had to make our own fun, play games and things outside. Hide-and-seek, and steal sticks and....

What do you mean steal sticks? I haven't heard of that.

Oh, that one was a game we played all the time. It was just have 2 piles of sticks, one on each side—there was a line in the middle. And then you were just supposed to go across on the other side and get all these sticks and bring them back to your place without the other team touching you.

Did you choose up teams?

Yes. It was kind of a rough game, but we liked it.

Well, did one person go to the opposing side while all the other team...or did both teams run at the same time?

Usually, just one would be going at a time. And the others would, of course, try to catch them. The others were watching—if anybody came, then they'd start after them.

So you'd be against half a dozen kids, then, to try to get that stick?

Yes. Try to get it over there without them touching all those others. They had to touch us before we got to where the pile was.

What other games did you play? Did you have any dolls?

We weren't much for dolls. We had our horse and our burros all the time; we didn't like dolls very well at that time. They finally gave us some dolls and a dollhouse, but we didn't use it very much. [laughter] In fact, our horses....

Would you say you were kind of tomboys?

Yes, I think we were.

Were your dolls manufactured dolls, not homemade?

All manufactured.

Tell me about your horse and your burro.

Well, we had one white burro that we rode and drove—rode him; then we'd hitch him up to a little buggy. And then we had our own saddle horses; each one of us had a saddle horse that we'd ride to school, or around the house, to get the mail.

Where did you go to get the mail?

We had to go about 4 miles to get the mail at the Derringer ranch, on the Reese River.

What was the nearest community where you might find a number of people?

I guess Austin. Lone was just a little tiny town, so I guess Austin—that was 50 miles.

Did you go there often?

We'd go there for celebrations, when they'd have dances, Fourth of July and different times, go and stay overnight. They had 2 dances at one time usually; we'd take them both in.

You mean on the same evening there would be 2 dances?

No, no. One following each other—one the one night and one, the other.

So you'd go in maybe on the Fourth of July; when else?

I don't remember any other particular dates that we'd go to Austin. I can't think of any other holidays that we might have gone there.

Where did you stay in Austin?

There used to be houses there that we could rent. We'd just all go in there.

The whole house?

Yes, old houses they'd have that we could rent.

Oh, that would be kind of fun. What else did you do in Austin?

Well, in the winter we used to sleigh ride, and...guess that's about all.

Did you look forward to going to Austin?

Oh, yes, we sure did.

What about clothing? Did you sew? Did your mother sew?

My mother sewed, yes. She made most all of our clothes. Hand them down from one to the other. [laughter]

Were you at the end of the line?

Yes, I was the third one, so I got the leftovers! [chuckles] It didn't bother me then.

Did you wear dresses, or did little girls wear pants?

No, we wore dresses most of the time.

Where did your mother get the fabric and...?

I don't remember that. I suppose in some of those little stores that they'd have like in Austin or Fallon, if ever they'd go there.

Did she buy much from the catalogs?

Yes, we did buy some from catalogs.

Did you look forward to the catalog time?

Oh, not as I remember; I don't think I did.

Where did you get your food supplies? Did you have a garden at the ranch?

Had a big garden, yes, but then they always used to go to Fallon for their main supplies about twice a year with a big truck and get all the sugar and flour and all that. Then we had our own beef and vegetables.

How did they process the beef? Did you butcher the year round? Did you have refrigeration?

They butchered, yes, year round, but we'd use it up so that they could save it some way. They didn't have refrigeration, but they'd like hang it up at night when it was cool and then cover it all up good in the daytime with a canvas.

And that kept it fresh and sweet?

Fresh until we ate it up.

Did you do any kind of food preserving at all?

I don't remember that they did any of that. Of course, they had to make their own butter and everything like that. But I don't believe they put up much of any vegetables, not that I can remember. They dried some; I remember that. They did dry corn and things like that.

How did they dry the corn? Now, this was for human consumption?

Yes. I don't remember, unless they just put it out in the sun; I really don't remember how they dried it. They'd take it off the cob.

One more thing about your home—did you have an inside bathroom, or did you have out...?

No, outside bathroom. And then we did have a tub inside, yes. We did have running water, I think, in the house, but it was just cold, I believe. We had to heat it for a bath.

Did you have a bathroom, a special room, or did everybody have to wash up in the kitchen?

Yes, there was a special room, a bathroom.

It had plumbing and everything?

Yes.

Running water?

Just cold, though. I don't think we had the hot water.

What was your house like?

Wasn't very much of a house, no. There was 3 or 4 different families lived there. So there was one main big house that my grandfather and grandmother lived in, and the ones that were unmarried. And then there was 2 or 3 that were married had separate little houses. They were just ordinary little wooden houses—nothing special.

How did you heat them?

With wood stoves.

It sounds like a close family, if everybody stayed at the ranch.

Yes. They were a real close family, real close.

How large was your house? With 6 youngsters you probably had to have a bit of room, didn't you?

Well, of course, these 3 were quite a bit later. think we had 3 bedrooms, as I remember.

Single story or 2-story?

Single. The main house where the grandparents lived was a double story. Ours was just single.

What was it made of?

Of wood, I think.

What were the walls on the inside like?

Just papered mostly. Painted, papered mostly.

Ceilings?

Yes. They were just, I think, wooden, but they were usually painted or papered.

Electricity?

No. We didn't have electricity. We had just the coal oil lamps. They were called Aladdin... that's the ones we had last, but the first ones were just ordinary oil lamps, you know, with a chimney.

What kind of chores did you have to do around the ranch?

Sometimes we'd milk the cows, and we'd gather the eggs from the chickens. [chuckling] And helped with all the work inside; we always had plenty to do. We had all that washing and ironing by hand and all that.

How did you do the wash?

Just by hand with an old scrub board.

In the house?

Yes. We'd boil our water and put the white clothes in the boiling water on the stove. Then we'd use that water....

Oh, after you took the white things out, then you used that water for the colored clothes?

For the colored clothing.

I see. Do you remember what kind of soaps you used?

I think it was mostly that handmade yellow soap, but I forget what they called it. I know they made their own soap, although it

seems to me this yellow soap that they used for clothes had a name—Fels Naptha?

There was the Fels Naptha, yes. Did you hang the laundry outside?

Yes.

Year round?

Yes.

Wasn't it awfully cold in the wintertime to hang out?

Yes, it was. We had to do it; didn't have any place inside.

Well, you moved away, then, from the ranch when you were about 15?

I went to Reno and went to 4 years of high school and one year of normal.

What high school did you go to?

It was called the Reno High School. About that time I think it was just this one. I took up things that I could use as a teacher, as I went one year to normal school in Reno.

In high school, what did you study?

Just the regular ones that you had to have.

Did every kid take the same course?

No. Whatever they wanted to be, the teachers would.. we had English and history and general science and language and mathematics—algebra and geometry.

Did you take any foreign language?

Yes, Spanish I did—2 years. I don't know a thing about it, but I took 2 years.

Did you always want to be a teacher, or what inspired you?

Yes, I always kind of had that in mind.

Did you have anyone in your family who was a schoolteacher?

Oh, yes, aunts by marriage. And then I remember an elderly lady that was an aunt, and she taught for a long, long time. I have 3 nieces that are teachers.

What did you study in the normal school?

Well, just the regular subjects that you were going to teach in grammar school. We took English and arithmetic and how to teach all these different subjects.

Where was the normal school?

It was in the University of Nevada.

Oh, I see. Was it a part of the university?

Yes.

And then what kind of certification—or was there such a thing as certification—did one have?

You would teach for 3 years, and then you had to go back and take more classes or you couldn't teach any more.

Did you do that?

No, I didn't; I got married.

[laughs] Where did you teach?

I taught in Smoky Valley the first year, on a ranch, and then I taught in Manhattan the second year. I was going with Carroll about that time [chuckling]; he lived in Manhattan. I could get that school, and I thought I'd like it—it was the first 4 grades. I guess that's what brought me there.

Was the school in Smoky Valley much like you described your school in Reese River?

Yes, only it was a much smaller schoolroom—just had one little tiny room with a stove and just the necessary things like that.

How many youngsters did you have?

I just had 6 in that school.

And how many grades?

About 4.

First 4?

Yes.

Remember your salary?

One hundred and thirty-five dollars, and then \$35 I paid for board and room.

With whom did you board?

With Mrs. Ben Farington at their ranch. The school was right there.

Were all the children the Farington children?

No, there was 2 Faringtons, 2 were Rogers children— Indian children—and 2 Mealman children.

Did the Indian parents work at the ranch?

They had a little ranch of their own right close. But they came there to school.

Remember anything about the children's abilities?

No, only I know the Indians weren't very smart in.. as I said, they did do pretty well in drawing and penmanship. But as far as anything like English or things like that, they weren't too good in.

Do you suppose that they went beyond the fourth grade?

Yes, lots of them did. Lots of them went through high school. I don't know about these particular ones, but there has been a lot around there that have gone clear through high school.

Did they have to go up to Reno, too?

Well, either Reno or Austin or any of those smaller towns closer, they probably went there.

Was there a high school at Austin?

Yes.

How come, you chose to go to Reno rather than Austin?

Oh, I don't know why.... My grandmother, grandfather bought this place in Reno just to

keep us there; I guess they thought it was a better school or something.

Oh, so then you stayed at home; you didn't board?

No, no. My grandmother bought a home there. So the 3 of us stayed there—my one sister and one cousin, they went to high school too.

And your grandmother stayed there, too?

Yes. She stayed there with us during the school year term.

Did you go home on holidays, or did you stay in...?

No, we didn't go home on holidays—just during the Christmas break or during summer vacation is all.

You said that your reason for moving to Manhattan was that you had met Carroll, who is Carroll Humphrey, your husband now. How did you meet Mr. Humphrey?

I met him down at the Darrough's Hot Springs in Smoky Valley at one Fourth of July celebration. One of my cousins introduced us. And we just started going together from then on. [laughs]

Sounds like it was worth your while, wasn't it?
[laughter]

Yes, it was.

What kind of celebration did you have down there?

Oh, they used to have squaw races or 3-legged races.

Is that what you called a 3-legged race—a “squaw” race?

I think that’s what they called it if I’m not mistaken. And, you know, different kind of races; that’s about all. Sometimes they’d have little rodeos, but not too many things like that.

Was it a very large place that you went to, the springs?

No. It’s just a ranch, but they had this hot springs, and they had a little pond or a little pool that you could swim in.

How long did this celebration last?

Oh, usually just the one day.

So it was close enough that everybody could come and leave?

Yes. Then they always had a dance afterwards on the Fourth, right there at the same place—right there at the springs. They had a building that they danced in. They usually would get music from Austin, or if there happened to be anybody in the valley that played; but we usually got Millie and Bert Acree from Austin.

And what did they play?

The piano and the drums.

Were they professional musicians that...?

They were just people that lived in Austin, but they played for all the dances in Austin, and wherever they could get them, they’d go; they were marvelous.

And so people knew about them, then?

Oh, yes. They played in Eureka and Reese River and Smoky—all those smaller places. Whenever they got a free time, they’d get them because they were so good.

Did they earn their living that way, or...?

No, no, no. He was the county clerk, I believe, for 50 years. He was such a nice fellow,.

They had sandwiches and cake—lovely cakes. They’d make them there at the springs. The people that ran the springs and gave the dance would make the refreshments.

The people who ran the springs, did they charge for this, or was this just a neighborly thing?

I think they charged for the eats and maybe to get in. I’ve kind of forgotten how that was.

And so how did you meet Mr. Humphrey? What was the occasion?

It was the Fourth of July celebration. My cousin introduced me to him, that she knew him well.

Did he ask you to dance or what?

Yes, yes, we danced. I think he probably took me home that night; I’ve forgotten. [laughter] He had a car—old Essex.

How had you gotten down to the springs for the party?

Well, with another car. We had cars then.

And you liked him?

Yes.

And did you go, then, the following autumn over to Manhattan? Did you get a job in Manhattan then?

Yes. The next fall I taught over there.

So you hadn't signed the contract, then, with...?

No, not on the ranch. I don't believe they had contracts in those days, as I can remember.

Where did you stay in Manhattan?

I stayed with Carroll's folks. They had a home there, and I boarded and roomed with them.

You were doing an inside job, weren't you?
[laughs]

Yes, you might say that. [laughter]

How much were you paid in Manhattan?

A hundred and fifty dollars a month. And then I paid \$50 for board and room.

Just couldn't get ahead, could you? [laughs]

No, couldn't get ahead.

And you ate with the family and that kind of thing?

Yes.

What was Mr. Humphrey's family doing in Manhattan?

He was mining. He had moved there. They were the original people that really discovered it—Carroll's uncle, John Humphrey. I don't

remember what year it was...1900, I imagine—around there.

What was the school like in Manhattan?

It was a bigger school. They had 2 rooms, because they had 2 teachers.. .or 3 teachers, I guess they had there. But I had the first 4 grades, so maybe it just seemed to me there was 3 teachers when I taught there. Still have the building; it's a nice building. They're having a Manhattan reunion again this year.

What is the school made out of?

The outside is tin. I don't remember what the inside is made of. It must be just plywood, I imagine.

Two rooms, you think?

Yes.

Desks?

Yes. Those little, old-fashioned desks.

Where you have the seat, and to the back of the seat is attached the desk for the other kid?

Yes.

And you had a desk?

Yes.

How was it heated?

It was heated by wood, I believe.

Did you have to fire it?

I Can't remember whether we had a wood stove or if we had oil then.

Did you have a principal?

Yes, there was a principal and I'm sure 2 other teachers, so there must have been 3 rooms in the building. But when I had the first 4 grades I don't know what the other 2 teachers were doing.

Can you remember the principal's name?

Price, I believe, was his last name.

Do you remember the other teacher's name?

Dunbar was her last name.

How many students did you have on the average?

Had about 15 there.

In that one room?

Yes.

Did you find that difficult?

No, not really. If it was any *more* than 4 grades, you wouldn't really have time, you know, but with the 4 grades, we got by. I believe they had a high school in Manhattan. That's where they had the 3 teachers. The principal was the one who taught high school, I believe, and the other lady taught the 4 higher grades of elementary school.

How long was it before you married Mr. Humphrey?

Two years after....

Did you teach after you were married?

No. I taught almost one year. The teacher got sick, and I just filled in for her.

Why didn't you teach after that?

Well, just didn't want to, I guess.

You retired to become a housewife, then?

Yes. My 3 years were up, too, really.

Oh, the 3 years for your certification? And you didn't want to go back to school?

H. No, no.

Was there any objection, though, in Manhattan to a teacher being married?

No. No, there wasn't.

And what was Mr. Humphrey doing?

He had charge of the hotel in Round Mountain at that time. I think it was called the Round Mountain Hotel. I don't know whether it had a name.

How large a hotel was it?

Not too large. I don't remember how many rooms it had.

How far away was Round Mountain from Manhattan?

It was about 30 miles.

Did he go and come every day?

No, he stayed in Round Mountain. He was living in Round Mountain.

This was before you were married?

Yes.

I see. Did he come on the weekends to see you, then?

Yes. [laughs]

Well, when your certification was over, did you stay in Manhattan?

Yes, we lived there from when we were first married for a few years, and then we....

I see. Then he came over; then he gave up his job in Round Mountain?

Yes, yes. He was working in the mine—a hoisting engineer in the mine is what he did. At Manhattan and Round Mountain, too, when he worked in the mine, that's what he did.

What was Manhattan like at that time, and can you give us a year?

The only thing that they were working at was the mines; the men were working at the mines. That's all the occupation there was.

What year are we talking about? You told me you were married in 1926 before we began taping, so it's about the mid-1920s, then?

Yes.

Can you tell me about how many people there were in town? What kind of a town was it? What did you do for fun?

Well, played basketball and...we had a town team that ladies and men both played on. [chuckles] We'd play Round Mountain, Austin and some of those.

Well, that sounds like fun. Did the town support this kind of activity?

Yes, it seemed to.

They would have a picture show once in a while, and a dance now and then. And we played a lot of cards—bridge. Have dinners together and picnics and fishing. There was a lot to do between—had to make your own fun.

You say you had a picture show, a movie house. Can you remember its name?

No, it didn't have a name. It was at this Toiyabe Literary Club. They had it there; that's where they had the dances, and they had a show there. That was just a fashionable club...these ladies started it there. Nearly all the ladies belonged to it.

Did you discuss books and that kind of thing?

Yes.

How often did you meet?

I think once a week.

You belonged, of course?

Yes.

Did you elect officers?

Yes.

Did you serve?

I don't believe I served. I know I didn't serve as president; I didn't want any of that. [laughs]

Why not?

Just not good with things like that.

Well, that's interesting that Manhattan had a literary club. Did the ladies in Round Mountain have a literary club?

No, I don't believe so.

Did any of them ever come over for your meetings?

I believe so. It was mostly Manhattan people.

How big was the club?

Oh, I imagine they had maybe 18 members, something like that. Very active.

How long did you stay in Manhattan?

Oh, I don't remember. We would be there for a few years, and then we moved to Round Mountain for a few years, and then we moved to Calistoga for a few years, and then we went back to Manhattan.... So we were up there just off and on for 3 or 4 years at a time.

What was the reason for moving around to these various places?

Just to get a job—Carroll to get work as a hoisting engineer, wherever the mines were working.

What kind of mines did he work in?

They were gold and silver, I believe.

After this moving around, where did you move and stay for any period of time, longer than 2 or 3 years?

Well, Tonopah. We were there about 35 years before we moved here to Bishop.

Oh. You told me previously that you moved to Tonopah around the time of the war.

Yes. Then I worked out at the base [Tonopah Army Air Base] . I forgot to tell that. I was a hostess out there at the enlisted men's club during the war [World War II]. It was real, real interesting. We just overseed this enlisted men's club, and we'd just run errands for the boys or sew on their chevrons or their patches. We would write letters for them and play cards with them if they wanted to, or shuffleboard, or whatever they wanted to do. Run errands in town for them. Real interesting. Met so many nice people.

Where was the base?

It was about 5 miles from Tonopah on the road towards Ely. There was supposed to be 5,000 men there at that time.

Did they come into Tonopah much?

Oh, yes. Whenever they were off shift, they'd come in there, gamble and....

That's quite an influx of population in a community the size of Tonopah.

It certainly was. And it was the last place they had before they went overseas, so they wanted to bring their families with them if they possibly could—their wife. Everybody

that had a room or any sort of a garage or anything that they could fix up for a room, they did for the soldiers, so that they could have their wives there with them for a short time.

They charged for this, for lodging?

Yes.

So that almost got to be an industry, then, didn't it?

Yes, it really did.

Did you make any lasting friendships with any of these soldiers?

Yes, really did. We wrote to about 10 of them, I think, for years and years. Just finally in the last few years we've kind of dropped that.

When you say "we," do you mean Mr. Humphrey, too?

No, no. Really just I made real good friends, but he didn't know them. They were so lonesome, and hated Tonopah so.

Why did they hate Tonopah?

I believe the main reason was because it was hard for them to get out to get any place; we were so far away from Reno or anything. They, of course, hitchhiked. I think that was the main reason.

How did Tonopah people receive these young men? Was there any jealousy or antipathy in the town against soldiers?

No, I don't think so at all. No, they all were wonderful to them. I think they, you know, shared their houses and everything with them, so that their wives could come out. They really kept Tonopah booming, I think, while living there.

Where did you live while you were in Tonopah?

When I was working Out at the base, we had one of those homes that they built just for the people that worked at the base. That was up on Mizpah Hill. And then after that we bought this home that they called the Eagle's Nest. It's way up on the side of the hill in Tonopah—one of the large houses there on Charles Street.

Is the house still standing?

Oh, it'll be there forever, I think; it was a big rock house, lots of cementwork around. It was an old house when we moved in. I don't know who built it. I know who built part of it. She was that heiress whose mother had her sterilized. Cooper...was that her name? Ann Cooper, I think. She built the bottom part of it. Underneath the top part she built a whole big living room and 2 bedrooms and 2 baths downstairs.

Was this some case of notoriety, this Ann Cooper?

Well, they said her mother didn't think she was...I guess she didn't want her to have children, so she.... [chuckles] She wasn't too bright, I don't think. She lived in this house for a while after they built the bottom part of it. Then she sold out. She was married to a mining man that lived there, and they sold

out. I can't remember what their name was... after she married him, I don't remember. She was married before, too, but Cooper was her name, I think, then.

What did Mr. Humphrey do in Tonopah?

He managed the Tonopah Club there for a number of years—was bartender and then managed.

Do you have any memories of that time that are particularly interesting?

Not especially, but just we had a nice time.

JOSEPHINE JOHNSON FOSTER: RECOLLECTIONS OF LIFE IN MILLERS, 1920-1926

Josephine Johnson Foster: I was born in Goldfield in 1912. At the time it was just a small town.

Elizabeth Patrick: Do you remember anything about those first days in Goldfield? What impressed you about your early life there?

Oh, I remember going to school. The school that I went to no longer exists. It was the Sundog school.

What kind of structure was it?

Well, originally it probably was brick. Most all over Goldfield schools were that way. Goldfield was really built to last. Tonopah was just [spontaneous]. But they had planned for Goldfield.

My father worked for the Tonopah & Goldfield Railroad. He was my stepfather, but as far as everything was concerned, he was my father. My real father and mother were divorced when I was very, very young. And Papa was my father.

I met my real father one time in Sacramento, and I was probably 8, maybe 10 years old when I met him. My grandmother and I were returning from a vacation, and we'd been up to Oregon and Washington. Friends of ours gave me 2 canary birds, and I called them Maggie and Jiggs. We stopped at Sacramento to change trains to go to Reno and then on home, and my father met us there. Well, I was carrying a little cage that had Maggie and Jiggs, and when we stepped off from the train, I hit the bottom of the birdcage, and Jiggs flew out. Well, I was just terrified I would lose my bird. So I put the cage down, and I ran after Jiggs. And lo and behold, here was the big old metal wheel of the train, and right underneath it was Jiggs. And I put my hand out; he came to me, and I held him like that, and I ran over and put him back in, and my father gave me a spanking—my real father—because I guess I just terrified all of them. You know, running under the train. That was the only time that I ever *really* remember seeing my honest father.

My stepfather's name was Sam Manor, but everybody called him Barney. He was named after Barney Oldfield. Barney Oldfield was a man who drove race cars. And Papa would tell me he drove faster than anybody, and they called him Barney for his speed.

My brother was born in Goldfield, and I was 8 years old when he was born. And in fact, the people that I was visiting that day—or staying with, really, because my mother was in the hospital, and I was staying with friends—and they were well-known there in Goldfield; their name was Mary and Jim Clark. Of course, they're both dead now; I think they're buried in the Tonopah graveyard. I was playing with Ann outside in the yard, and Mrs. Clark came out and said, "You have a baby brother." And I was furious. I wanted a baby sister. I had no idea that babies came as tiny. I expected a full-grown, 8-year-old boy as a baby brother. He was named after my father. He's Sam, Jr.

Probably it was right soon after that that we lived in Millers. Millers is 15 miles west-northwest of Tonopah on the way to Reno. At that particular time there were 2 mills in Millers; that was the reason that it was called Millers. One was for the Belmont Company, and one was for the Tonopah Extension mines. The big mill, I believe, had close to a hundred stamps. I know that it was so loud that when the stamps were going, when they stopped suddenly in the middle of the night everybody woke up. The mills operated on a 24-hour basis. They shipped both silver and gold bullion from the mill.

I really don't know too much about milling, but I know that they used the cyanide process. In fact, I was taught how to swim in one of the vats for the cyanide process. They cleaned one of the tanks out and used it as a swimming pool for the children. It was about 12 foot in circumference and maybe 20 feet

deep; a little ladder going down it. And we went swimming. My mother couldn't swim a lick, and her friend couldn't swim. They'd watch us. I always thought that she was either very brave or pretty stupid, and I know she wasn't stupid; I just didn't know how she'd ever manage!

How did you, a little desert child, learn to swim?

Oh, I guess it's natural for children to swim. I took my Ruthie swimming when she was 6 months old. And the babies just swim and children swim—why, I think it's natural.

Tell me more about life at Millers. Did you have your own house there, or did you have a company house, a railroad house?

We had a company house. My father was the section foreman, and Millers really wasn't a very big town. Our school was a one-room school, one teacher for the 8 grades. In fact, I still have the bell they used to ring. My mother was on the school board for many, many, many years. And when the school was abandoned, why, they gave her the bell, and she in turn gave it to me.

When was that approximately?

I would imagine probably in the Thirties, during the Depression, because silver was terribly low, and naturally all the mines closed down. And when the mines closed down, why, you couldn't have any ore to mill, so the mills closed down

How many families lived at Millers?

That I couldn't tell you, either, because the only ones that I...I had very good friends

by the name of Johnson. In fact, Ted was always like my older brother. He's 8 years older than I am. My own half brother is 8 years younger. And, like I say, I always went by the name of Johnson; I never went by the name of Manor. Papa wanted to adopt me, and my mother was very modern in a lot of ways; she said, no, that she didn't want me to feel differently when I was grown—to be bitter about possibly having the name Manor, wanting the name Johnson. And in reality it was just the opposite: all my life I thought, "Why isn't my name Manor?" because I loved my dad so.

But I have no idea how many people were there. I can remember the family Marchment was an English family. They had 2 daughters, Florence and Georgina, and a son, Walter. And he worked and lived at the substation. The Johnsons that I mentioned had a grocery store. A man by the name of Morris had 2 daughters and 2 boys—Bob and Joel, and Hazel...and I believe Barbara was the other girl's name. I can't even remember the schoolteacher's name. I should be able to remember it, too, because she boarded at our house for at least one term before she got her own house. I can remember she always reminded me of a bird! She was a delightful person; I liked her very, very much, but I can't recall her name.

Then she stayed for more than one term?

I think teachers usually did in those years. In fact, I think that's one of the sad things about progress. The teachers that I had...I don't ever recall being given homework, but I do very much remember using our encyclopedia and looking things up, spending a lot of time looking at the heavens and trying to figure out where different planets were. Always watching,

always reading. And that was only by the curiosity that the teachers aroused in us. When I graduated from high school, I was only 16, which is entirely too young. It's awful because you're...it just isn't good. And I didn't go on to [college]. I went to business school for a while, and then went to work. Sometimes I wonder maybe I should have gone and then again I think no, I'm glad I didn't because I enjoyed what I've done.

I'd like to go back and explore just a little more that one-room school. Did you graduate from that school in Millers?

From the eighth grade, yes.

Can you remember approximately—I know the number changed—but approximately how many youngsters were in this classroom at one time?

Oh, I don't know; I would say probably 20, in all grades.

What kind of a building was it?

Oh, just a little frame building. In fact, I have pictures of it at home. Just a frame building like so many of the buildings that you saw in the early days.

What kind of facilities did it have?

All the usual: Chic Sale in the back—one for the boys, one for the girls. Outdoor toilets. And they were....

Why did they call it that?

I have no idea.

The water at school was just purely a bucket. There was no piped water in.

Did the teacher bring the bucket every day, Or...?

No, I think that the fathers did that; I know I can remember my dad doing it. I imagine it was maybe some of the older boys. You know, children don't pay attention to things like that, really.

I know that we all enjoyed school. We presented plays like everybody.

Did you present these for your fellow students or for the family?

Fellow students and family, at the school. It was a large room, and the front where the teacher sat had a raised area, so it was a natural stage. That's what we used, because whenever we presented our plays and things, they would move her desk, and we would be up there. We even had a piano. We all sang; we all marched in and said our pledge of allegiance every morning. We did a certain amount of singing; I never could sing, but I enjoyed it.

Did you sing every morning?

Yes. That was part of the opening.

How was the building heated?

The regular old, pot-bellied stove. It must have been adequate because I don't ever remember being cold.

What about lunch? Did the youngsters go home for lunch, or did you pack a lunch?

We usually took a lunch with us. And I know that we did have recess. I couldn't tell you how long it was. It was a break, and we had swings. And that was the extent of our....

What about library facilities or books? Did you have anything like that?

I don't know; we always had many books at home. And I don't ever remember really having a library. I remember going to the library in Tonopah to get special books, you know, looking something up.

Well, if there were about 20 youngsters in that class, then you had playmates. You weren't a lonesome child.

I was never a lonesome child, ever. The freedom that I had as a child I could never have allowed to my children. I've often thought about my mother and father, how they allowed me to become strong. The freedom that you were given, the things that you were allowed to do....

After I did my chores on a Saturday... we had a lot of wind on the desert, and my mother was a fussy housekeeper, a meticulous housekeeper. I always had to keep my own room up, keep the wood box filled and the ashes out, take care of the chicken house, because everybody had their own chickens. And I hated that. To keep the cupboards clean. And when I did that, why, I was free. She wouldn't say, "You have to be home at such-and-such a time." Now this is when I was real little. But we just ran. Adventures forever, the things that I can remember.... Climbing a mountain; it's not a mountain—a little hill not too far from Millers. And they had a water tank on top of that mountain—or hill—that provided the water for the little town. And, oh, I would imagine it's probably a mile and a half, 2 miles out of town. Yes, I mean that's a long ways for a small child to go, and nothing ever happened to me. I think it was good for me.

You had fellow adventurers?

Oh, yes. Of course I did. But it was just the idea that children were allowed a great deal more freedom then. must have had many guardian angels. I never ever had a broken bone...sunburned many times because I was fair skinned, and a lot of bruises and skinned places. But, like I say, I never had a broken bone.

Did your mother have any favorite folk remedies?

F. No. My grandmother was a remarkable little person. She had ever so many remedies, I've often wished that I knew how to do the things that she did. As one example she made a hand cream or salve, and I have no idea what she put in it. It was *really, really* good for your face, and I was always using it. But I have no idea how she did it or what she put in it. It smelled good. But I can remember one remedy that she used—and again I don't know how she did it—was a cough syrup that she made out of the juice of onions and sugar. And it really worked.

Speaking of that, I can remember accidents. Nothing ever happened to me, but my father...one of the Mexicans that worked for him—a dear little man, and we all loved him, Martin—came over to see Papa. He had a German Luger pistol that wasn't working right, and he asked Papa to fix it for him. As he went to hand it to Papa, he pulled the trigger, and the bullet entered just below my dad's knee, and it came out on the opposite side. It shattered the double bone.

The closest doctor was at Tonopah 20 miles away. I don't know where Mama was. I know I ran over to Aunt Ollie and Uncle Harvey—they were visiting—and got her.

And I don't recall who took him to Tonopah. I heard my dad talk later about how Dr. Craig was a wonderful doctor but a very rough doctor. He didn't believe in coddling anyone. He used a long, metal...Papa said it looked like the ramrod that you used to clean a gun. He dipped it in iodine and went like that up and down the cut. [laughter] And he asked my dad, "Does that hurt, Barney?"

And my father never ever swore; I've never *heard* my father swear. And he said, "Dad-gum-it, you *know* it hurts." But his leg healed beautifully, and it spoke for the fact that he was a good doctor.

Do you remember any games you played, or did you just sort of roam around?

No, I think we probably had a good many of the games like children played everywhere. We played hide-and-seek and run, sheep, run. Used to play a game we called Auntie-i-over. We played it with a ball. You threw it over a house. You had teams.

Which means the houses weren't too large for the youngsters....

No, no, they weren't.

I'm positive, that the way we were brought up, the way we were never coddled, the way that we used shank's mare rather than a Ford or a Chevy or a vehicle to take us—we never ever rode; we walked. And most of the time. we didn't walk; we ran. But, I think we were stronger for it. By all of the exercise that we had, by the way we were brought up, I think that I'm far stronger than my grandson will be when he's my age. We did things ourselves. Nowadays my daughter takes my grandson to school, brings him back. I don't think that's good. I think you should have exercise.

The Johnsons had a grocery store. How large was it? Did your mother do all of her grocery shopping there?

No, I don't recall that we did very much shopping there. Most of the shopping that we did was in Tonopah—the old Central Market. Of course, it's long gone. But I can remember going up to Johnson's maybe and getting a candy bar, like all children do.

What about cooking? You remarked that you had to take out the ashes and keep firewood. Did our mother cook on a wood-burning stove?

Yes. Year round. In the summertime you planned cooking...I imagine the same way down here in Vegas in the early, early days before air conditioning. You did your heavy cooking early in the morning.

What about preservation of food?

We had a root cellar and an ice box. Our root cellar wasn't under the house; it was out in the yard. It was always cool, even in the heat of the summer. And you had the regular old ice box with the big chunks of ice.

Out at Millers, where did you get the ice?

From the railroad. They had- refrigerated cars.

You moved from Goldfield when you were around 8 years old?

Yes. My brother was born when I was 8, which is 1920. And I would imagine that we were living probably in Millers at that time, although I really don't know that...I can remember when Goldfield burned in 1923.

We were in Millers, and I can remember you could see it. That's another thing that you don't realize—the clarity of the air at that time, the difference from what it is now. People would come to visit us from either the East or from a city, and they were forever getting lost because they would go out for what they thought was a short walk and not pay any attention, and people would have to go after them because they couldn't judge distance, and they would go too far. But like I say, I can remember very easily all that black smoke and how awful we felt.

In all probability, the reason I was such a tomboy was the fact that Papa and I were so close, and I had no older brother. Papa taught me how to shoot; he taught me how to throw a ball; he taught how to hit—you know, I mean little girls aren't supposed to know how to hit, but Papa taught me all those things. Not that I fought; I never ever did fight, but I just plain was a tomboy. And my mother didn't like it because I was always tearing my clothes. She made me wear these horrible black sateen pants—bloomers—and I truly hated them. She not only made them; she starched them, and they were uncomfortable! [laughing] Oh, I had rough places.

I bet she had to iron them, too.

Oh, yes. You ironed everything. There was *hours* of ironing. I know that's how I learned how to iron was on what they called sad irons; and I know why they were called "sad"—that's the way you felt when you did it.

Did you heat them on top of the stove?

Yes.

So that meant you had to have the stove going.

The stove going, and your feet would hurt. Wash day was a horrible day. My mother was so tiny. I'm really not what you'd call a big woman, although I'm a lot bigger than she was. I'm not quite 5 foot 2. Mama wasn't 5 feet. My grandmother was 4 foot 10. My one daughter is 5 foot 4, and the other one is 5 foot 6. Each one of us are a little bit bigger than the other one.

But wash day was a horrible day. You just stop and figure.... You think nowadays we're forever washing; I guess we're overly clean; we wear our clothes out washing. But when my mother washed, it was the old scrub washboard. And I can remember the first washing machine and how delighted she was with it. Of course, that was nothing like the machines that they have now. But it used to be we had the big, old copper boiler on the stove—you boiled your clothes.

How often did she do the laundry?

Well, how was it? Wash on Monday, iron on Tuesday, bake on Wednesday, something or other on Thursday; Friday they had...every day of the week. And that was true: you did that. And I can remember when we used to bathe on Saturday. We bathed in a little corrugated tub in front of the kitchen stove. If you bent over, not watching, you'd have a burned place. But it was every Saturday.

You utilized every drop of water. The water that you bathed in was never thrown away. You put it around your trees or your...if you had a little garden. And you never threw water away. Nowadays people are careless about water, but even today I never wash my teeth and let the water run; I moisten my toothbrush and then shut it off.

Well, was the water piped to the house, or did you have a well or a cistern?

It was piped to the house. But I think that it was possibly...you knew how valuable that water was.

You did have, though, running water in the house?

Yes.

But then you had outside toilets?

Yes, in those days you did have an outside toilet. I mean everybody did. I know that we had a house in Tonopah, and the house in Tonopah had an outside toilet, too. In fact, my bathroom in my present home was the root cellar, and then was converted to a bath.

In the house in Millers did you have your own room?

I had my room, my brother had his room, and there were the 3 bedrooms, and we had a living room and a dining room and a kitchen.

What happened to that house?

Well, houses danced around, in a sense. I don't know what happened to our house, but I know that the houses from the mill are in Tonopah. The Truebas, a Spanish Basque family, renovated them. The father and mother are dead, and Delbert, the youngest son, is dead. But Dick, the oldest son, works for the post office in Tonopah and is still there. They bought these houses and moved them to Tonopah and used them as rental houses.

We were talking about the red light district being behind the L & L Motel. Well, just beyond the L & L Motel on, I believe, Booker Street, there's 2 or 3 houses that are the old Millers houses. Dick Trueba lives in

one; one was sold to a nurse at the hospital— Grace Wilson bought that one; and the other one Lela Trueba Fewson lives in, and that was Harcourt's house. And the old boardinghouse from Millers, they put it next to the hotel, and it now is the Montgomery Ward store. But it's all covered over with siding, so that you can't tell.

You mean the old boardinghouse from Millers is part of the structure in Montgomery Wards?

Yes.

So it was moved and then added to and built around?

Yes. In fact, I think that what was the boardinghouse is probably an office now.

What was the Harcourt house?

Well, that was part of the mill. Mr. Harcourt was the superintendent of the Extension mill. The Belmont mill, I don't know too much about it. It was at the lower end of town, and evidently it must have closed sooner than the other one did. And I really don't know when they stopped, except like I say, the price of silver was so low, and I think that's what closed both the mines in Tonopah and also the mill at Millers.

ELIZABETH ROBERTS: MEMORIES OF TONOPAH, 1916-1970S

Elizabeth Roberts: I was born in Tonopah, Nevada, 16 May 1911.

Elizabeth Patrick: How long had your family been in Tonopah?

They moved here about in 1905. They were married when they came to Tonopah from Kansas City. They had lived in Kansas City, but originally they came from Ireland. They were married in Kansas City.

Did your father come first?

Yes, he came first, and then my mother came later. And then when they heard about the boom in Tonopah, why, they moved to Tonopah and lived in Tonopah ever since.

What business was your father in?

Well, he was a miner, and then later he had a drayage business, an express wagon.

In Ireland, had he been a miner?

No, I don't think so—farmer. I think he was working on the railroad in Kansas City, and then he heard about the boom and came west.

How many brothers and sisters did you have?

R: I had 2 brothers and 2 sisters. My oldest sister was Mary, and my brother John. Then I was the third one. Then Helen, and then James. That's 5 children.

Did you go to school here in Tonopah?

Yes, I started at kindergarten with Mrs. Curry. (laughs) She was my kindergarten teacher, and I graduated from Tonopah High School in 1929.

You went to the grade school and the high school?

Right.

What did you study in high school?

Oh, I took mostly a literary Course, preparing for university, So I had 3 years of English, and 2 years of foreign language, and I had 3 years of science, and then I also took a business course. I had 2 years of shorthand, and I had 2 years of typing, and I had bookkeeping. All my life I wanted to be a teacher, so I took a literary course. At that time there were certain requirements that you had to have in order to enter the university, so I took all those requirements.

Why do you suppose you wanted to be a teacher?

I don't know, I just always wanted to be a teacher. Most children change from one thing to another. You know, one day they want to be something; then the next week, something else. But I always wanted to be a teacher, so I just went ahead and worked towards that goal.

You liked school, then?

Oh, yes.

What is outstanding in your mind about your school days?

I don't remember the first grade teacher so well. remember Mrs. Curieux. She was my fourth grade teacher. She taught here for a long time. And my fifth grade teacher... don't remember her name, but I know I was kind of her pet. She let me wear her watch one day, and an airplane flew over the school. you know, in those days we didn't have very many planes, but an airplane flew over. We were on the ground floor, so a lot of the kids jumped out of the window. I went to jump out of the window, and I remembered the watch—I thought, "Oh,

my goodness I might break the watch." So then I had to take time to go through the door and the hall and get outside to see the airplane! [laughs]

Was that Unusual to see a plane?

Yes, we didn't have very many planes at that time. And then in the junior high I had Miss Annie Bradley and Miss Helene Slaven. Miss Bradley had taught in Belmont for many years before she came to Tonopah. She was the math and penmanship teacher, and Miss Slaven taught English.

And then in high school, I had Miss Lucille Blake for an English teacher. And let's see....Mr. Paul Shepherd was science and math. Mr. Long taught history and music. He later went to Las Vegas and was teaching in Las Vegas, I think. And Mr. Jacobsen was our principal when I was in high school.

How large was the high school?

Oh, I guess about 300 students. Yes, it was a pretty good size. We had real good basketball teams.

Did they have state tournaments then, as they do now?

Oh, yes, we had state tournaments. I don't know whether I was in high school or not, but, anyhow, the basketball team won the state tournament, and then they went to Chicago. So we really had a good basketball team. Tonopah's always been a basketball town. They did have football, I think, in the early days of the school, and then they discontinued it. But they had basketball all the time.

Did the whole town turn out?

Oh, everybody, yes. The gym was packed! [chuckles] Everybody went to basketball games, and they still do.

Did you as a girl participate in any sports?

Yes, I played basketball. I was on the girls' basketball team.

Did a lot of girls do that?

Yes, quite a few. That's about all we had, then, was the girls' basketball team and boys' basketball team. They did have some track, but mostly the boys went out for track; girls didn't do that too much.

Did you have a good gym?

Yes, we had...it was a real good gym. It was small, but it was a good gym.

What about showers and physical equipment like that?

Yes, they had showers, all showers.

What did you do for fun—extracurricular activities—in school? Was there a movie house in town?

Oh, yes, there was a movie. We went to the movies, yes. The Butler Theater was out on Main Street, right about where the Jim Butler Motel is now. Yes, we went to movies; we went to dances—they used to have lots of dances in the auditorium. It's now the civic center, but at that time it was called the auditorium. And they used to have dances in the Eagles Hall. We had lots of school dances. We used to have lots of school parties and dances.

Who provided the music?

Well, they had orchestras here. And then for the school dances, mostly the high school band or high school orchestra. Live music all the time. Oh, yes, we had a lot of dances. Then we used to go on picnics and hiking and things like that. And we had a swimming pool here. It was down at the Victor mine. Lots of children that'd come from California couldn't swim. They came here and all the kids in Tonopah could swim because we had that swimming pool. We used to have to walk down there; it was about a mile or a mile and a half down.

Did the mine company provide it?

Well, it belonged to the town, and they had the water, then, from the mine. See, they pumped the water out of the mine and' into the swimming pool. And the water was always warm, pumping out of the ground. And it was all enclosed.

Does it still exist?

No. The pool, I think, is there—part of the pool—but the building has been torn down. And they had the park there; they called it the Victor Park. They had a lot of trees. So we could go swimming, and then we'd go eat in the park. And then they also had dances in the park; they had a pavilion there in the park, so at night they would have dances. And on Fourth of July we always had big parades. We were all in parades. [chuckling] Yes, so we always had those. And then the carnivals would come to town.

Where did they put their grounds or their camp?

Carnivals were mostly down close to where the civic center is now, right in the middle of town, almost.

Was that a big event?

Oh, yes, it was a big event.

And we used to have a roller skating rink down in this old auditorium. We could skate down there, and then we also skated at the schoolhouse. They had a nice cement walk up there; we used to skate there.

We did a lot of sleigh riding. We had lots of snow in those days, so we did a lot of sleigh riding in the wintertime just down on all the hills right in town. We went Brougher Avenue.... At night they'd build a big bonfire at the top of the hill there, and we had big bobsleds, and we'd coast down Bryan Avenue over here and Brougher over there. Oh, yes, there was lots of sleigh riding.

Did all the kids in town come there and kind of congregate?

Yes. Kids and young people—-young men and young women, you know. We'd have big bonfires. They'd build the big bonfire, and then they'd have these bobsleds. And of course, lots of kids had their own sleds, too, so that was a good winter sport. The bobsleds were homemade, but the other sleds were boughten sleds. We don't have that much snow any more. The kids don't sleigh ride like we used to. We didn't have a lot of cars in those days, you know, so we could really go a long ways. We could sleigh ride from the top of Brougher over there by the K. C. Hall, go down Brougher and go all the way down to Main Street, and down Main Street to the old depot or down to the Extension mine. We could go a long ways! We didn't have to watch out for cars too much because there weren't too many of them.

Mr. Beesley lived in a big house right there on South Street. He used to work at the Victor mine, and he had one of these old-fashioned cars. We used to walk down to the swimming

pool—from here way down about a mile or mile and a half—and swim all day, and then lots of times we'd get a ride back with him. He had one of these old-fashioned cars, you know. He used to come up through Main Street. Well, I don't know why we didn't want anybody to see us riding in that old-fashioned car, but when we'd come through Main Street, we'd all duck down in the car. [laughter]

Oh, was the car older than was fashionable?

Yes, it was real old-fashioned! [laughter] We liked the ride, but we didn't want anybody to see us in the car! [laughter]

Oh, and we used to always have donkeys. Almost all the kids in town had some kind of a burro. We would make a cart, and we'd go around in the burro cart, and we'd gather bottles, and we'd gather wood; we'd gather sawdust and sell all that.

What did you sell sawdust for?

To the restaurants and the butcher shops. They'd put the sawdust on the floors. You could get the sawdust from the mines, where they cut all their timber. They had all this sawdust, so you could just...well, they'd give it to us to get it out of the way! [laughs] So then we could sell it. We got 25¢ a gunnysack.

We had to harness the burro up to the cart and go over to the mines. We went to the Belmont mine and to the West End and to the Ohio mine. So then we used to go in and get sawdust and sell that. It's one way of making money! We didn't have very much money in those days.

What about the bottles that you gathered?

We'd sell those to the stores—beer bottles; all kinds of beer bottles.

They could be refilled?

Yes. And we had a bottling works here—beer and soda water, things like that. The Tonopah Bottling Works, I think it was called. It was up off of Main Street. It was an adobe building, and I think the remnants are still there.

Then, in summer we used to get ice. The ice man would come along, you know. He had block ice, and he would come in a wagon. He would sell the ice, and we'd always run out to the wagon to get the little pieces of ice! [laughing]

In the early days, you know, most everything was horses and wagons, as there were very few cars. And then, of course, then after the cars came in, why, then we got rid of the horses and the donkeys.

Did all of you children each have a donkey, a burro, or did you just have one in your family?

Oh, we had, I think, 3.

Did you get them from the wild, or did you...?

Well, I don't know. They were just all around here, you know. I guess the prospectors brought them in.

So all you had to do was go out and get them, is that it?

Yes.

Did you have saddles for them, or did you ride bareback?

R: Just ride the donkey bareback. But then we had a harness, so that we could harness him up to the cart.

Did you ride those to school or just to play with?

Oh, just to play. We lived right by the school, and all the children walked to school. No matter where they lived, they walked to school.

What kind of discipline did you have in school? What happened if there were some sort of misdemeanor? What kind of punishment would there be? Or would there be any punishment?

Oh, yes, there would be punishment. I know we had one teacher—a Mrs. Gootch—she had a rubber hose, and if they misbehaved, she'd take them in the closet and give them a couple of whacks with the rubber hose. She was my sixth grade teacher. But the children all behaved pretty well.

Did Mrs. Gootch last long in the school system?

Oh, yes, she stayed a long time, yes.

Nobody objected.

No.

What about the principal? Were teachers allowed to administer their own punishment?

I think they were. But most of the children behaved, so they didn't, you know.... If they went home and told someone that they were punished at school, why, then they got punished at home on top of that. It isn't like it is today.

Where was your family home?

Right at the corner of Bryan Avenue and Prospect Street. It's right by the school. All I had to do was walk across the street to the school.

It was a pretty large house. It had nice bay windows in the front room, and we had a piano. We had nice furniture— oak tables and chairs.

Your father was a successful man, then, there in Tonopah?

Right, yes. Tonopah was good to us. He worked for the Belmont Mining Company, and then he had his own draying business, and that was real good. And express business hauling trunks and luggage and moving people, because people didn't have cars or trucks like they do today. So if you wanted to move someplace, you had to hire somebody to move you. Or if you wanted to go out on the train or something, you had to have somebody take your suitcase down to the depot. So that's what he did.

What was the company called?

Well, it [was] just his own.

He didn't have an office or anything?

No. Just a home phone. And then we had a large warehouse down where the telephone company is now, where he stored furniture and things for people when they would leave. He was in that business for about 20 years, I guess, then he sold out. It ended more when trucks came in and everybody began to have their own cars, maybe about 1930 or 1931, when I was going to school.

Did you ever go down to Goldfield?

Once in a while.

What were the relationships between Goldfield and Tonopah?

[chuckles] They were kind of rivals, especially all the basketball and baseball teams. It still is, I think, kind of a rivalry.

Was it a friendly rivalry?

Yes, it was friendly. But, of course, we didn't go to Goldfield much; or we didn't go anyplace much because we didn't have any way of going—no cars. People didn't travel much in those days, not like they do today.

Wasn't there a stage that went down to Goldfield and also a train?

Yes, the train went.

But you didn't often do that?

No, we didn't travel much.

Do you remember the fire down in Goldfield? Today is the fifty-sixth anniversary of it.

Yes, I remember that fire. We could see the smoke from home. It was really a bad fire, but they've had a lot of bad fires in Goldfield. The town's been destroyed 3 or 4 times with fires or floods. They had that flood, too.

I guess Tonopah had some bad fires, too. We had the big casino down at the lower end of town. All that lower end of town burned one day; I remember that. That was when we were just kids in school. I don't know just exactly what year it was...1924 or 1925, something like that. All that lower end of town burned. Then we had one fire from where the Jim Butler Motel is now up to past where the bank is. Of course, I don't remember that, but that all burned, too. And then we didn't have fire engines; we had horses, and those pumps. Lots of wood. If anything caught on fire, I guess it was pretty hard to put anything out.

And we always have a breeze, so it was kind of bad.

Did your mother sew your clothing, or did you buy things?

Yes, my mother was a real good seamstress. She made most of our clothes.

Where did you buy the fabric?

Oh, we had a lot of stores here. We had some real nice stores. We had a Penney's...oh, we had lots of stores.

Did you ever buy much from the catalogs?

No. We bought everything mostly in town. There were lots of drugstores and lots of hardware stores, clothing stores and jeweler shops.

Where did you go to college, then?

Went to the University of Nevada. I took a teaching course—normal course, it was called, just for teachers. So I took that, and I graduated from that in 1931. Then I started teaching in Manhattan. I taught primary grades in Manhattan. I taught there for 7 years.

That's from 1931 to 1938?

Through 1938. And in those days, after you taught 5 consecutive years, you could have a life diploma [teaching certificate]. I got my life diploma for teaching, and then I did go to summer school, and I went one year to Arizona State Teachers College, and then San Francisco State. And then after I came to Tonopah to teach in 1951, why, then I went back to summer school, and I got my degree from the University of Nevada.

Tell me something about your experiences in Manhattan—the kind of classroom you had, and the children and....

Well, we had just this one school. It was a pretty large building; it had 3 large rooms—one for the primary grades, one for the upper grades and one for the high school. It had a little anteroom out in front—2 little anterooms and a hall. And the rooms were large. We had nice desks; we had plenty of supplies—all kinds of supplies. We had a stove made out of an oil barrel, and so you put the whole log in at one time. And then we did have a janitor; we had Mrs. Sibrisky as our first janitor. She did the janitor work, so we didn't have to do any janitor work. The rooms were always warm and clean, and we had all the supplies we wanted.

Did the kids go home for lunch, or did they bring it?

They all went home for lunch, yes.

Do you remember what your first salary was teaching school?

One hundred and fifty dollars a month. And Mrs. Cornell—she is Rose Walter's sister—she was on the school board. So I got my first position from Nellie Cornell. And then when she retired from the school board, Rose was on the school board. Yes, and all the children were well behaved; we had lots of fun.

Our first principal over there [taught] all 4 years of high school. And then we had an upper grade teacher for the upper grades. That was my first year of teaching.

We had lots of plays. Some of the children in high school are the ones who had the plays. They would have 3 or 4 plays a year. They had a hall in Manhattan where they would have

the plays, and then it was also a dance hall, so we had dances. Almost every Saturday night we had a dance in Manhattan or Round Mountain or Darrough's.

Would you go from place to place?

Place to place, yes, for the dances. And then we would even go up and put on our plays in Austin. We charged admission. Everybody in town came, and from all around. Everything was well attended, you know.

A lot of community spirit, wasn't there?

Right. Anything that you had, why, everybody in town went. [laughter] So we really had a lot of good times in Manhattan.

Did many of the youngsters graduate from high school?

Yes, quite a few of them graduated, and some of them went on to college. John Brackett, one boy in Manhattan, went to the University of Nevada, and he took journalism. And then he went into California, and he's been working there. He was a newspaperman there.

What about the girls? Did they graduate from high school?

Oh, yes, the girls graduated. Oh, yes. All of them that attended school would graduate. [Those were happy years.]

Why did you leave, then? What happened that caused you to move on?

Well, then I got married.

To a Manhattan boy?

He wasn't a Manhattan boy, no. At that time Manhattan was kind of booming, you know. The Whitecaps mine was working, and it was pretty lively over there. My husband's family came from Carrizozo, New Mexico. He had 2 uncles living in California in Oakdale, and he was living with them. And then they lived in Bisbee, too. He worked in the mines in Bisbee, Arizona. His father came to Manhattan to work in the mines, so then he came to Manhattan. I married him in 1938, so I stopped teaching.

How did you meet him?

Oh, well, just everybody met everybody in Manhattan! [laughs] Small town and all.

What did you do after your marriage in 1938?

We stayed in Manhattan for one year.

Did you discontinue teaching?

Yes, by my own choice. In Tonopah, teachers couldn't be married in those days. So I resigned to get married. Then we lived in Manhattan for one year, and then my husband went down to Oakland to work, and I went up to Mountain City and taught for one year. So it was quite a ways. But I taught one year in Mountain City, and then I went to Oakland to live.

[From 1940 to 1945 Mrs. Roberts and her husband moved several times. During this period, 2 children were born to them.—ed.]

We left Sparks in about 1945 and went back to Manhattan. When I returned to Manhattan, then I started teaching again.

What did your husband do in Manhattan?

He was a miner, and he was working on the dredge in Manhattan.

Had there been a great deal of change in those 8 years?

Yes, quite a bit. Everybody left Manhattan during the war years. A lot of the people went to Gabbs to work, so many of the older families...there weren't too many people in Manhattan then. Everybody moved out. So when I went back to Manhattan to teach, I was the only teacher there, then, in 1946.

And you taught all grades?

Yes, through the eighth grade.

Then in 1951 my husband was working on the dredge in Round Mountain, and he was electrocuted. So then I left Manhattan. I came to Tonopah and began teaching in Tonopah. My mother was living here, and Mrs. Curieux had retired; she retired in 1951, and so there was an opening here. Of course, there were lots of openings elsewhere then, too. But my mother was here, and my brothers were living here, so I just came home and stayed! I've been home ever since.

In Tonopah I taught first grade for 2 years. Then I taught fourth grade, and then I taught fifth grade for about 8 or 9 years. I taught in Tonopah 26 years. Altogether I've taught 39 years. I retired in 1977.

Tell me, was there any racial segregation or discrimination in the schools that you remember? Were there any black students... were there any little Negro children in your classes?

No, we had very few Negroes, and the Negro families that were here were real nice. There was Charlie Stewart, and then Mrs. Georgia Porter was a music teacher, and she was black.

Where did she live?

She lived first up on Main Street, and then she moved over here on Brougner Avenue. Her mother and father lived with her, and their names were Marshalls. They were black, and then the barber lived right up here on South Street. But that's about all the blacks we had.

And they mingled freely in the community?

Oh, yes. And then we had a Mr. Fields. He was a tailor. He was black, too. That's about all the blacks we had. We didn't have very many blacks, but there were a lot of Chinamen. You know, in the early days they had these laundries and restaurants. Quite a few Chinese. And then they had quite a few Mexicans. The whites didn't like the Mexicans too well.

But they didn't object to the blacks?

No.

Wonder why?

I don't know. The Mexicans...I don't know whether they came in when the strike was on or not. You know, the men had a strike, and they might have come in then to work in the mines in place of the white men, and so maybe that's why the Mexicans.... I don't know definitely. But I know they didn't like the Mexicans. But the blacks, we didn't have too many, and they were never trouble.

Are there any black families now that you know of?

I don't think there's anyone here that I know of, unless they would be in the service. I know there was one black boy that went

to school, but he was living with a white family here. He played basketball on the basketball team. don't know how they got him, but anyhow he was playing basketball. He graduated. But he came from Wisconsin or someplace. We don't have too many Mexican families any more, either. Mostly all white.

How were the Chinese children treated?

I really don't remember too many Chinese children, but I think they were treated all right.

We had several churches, too. We have the Catholic and Presbyterian and Episcopalian. The Salvation Army used to be here, and we had the Christian Scientists.

You don't have them any more though, do you?

We don't have Christian Science; that hasn't been here for a long time. We have the Episcopal and the Catholic and the Presbyterian. And now we have the Baptist; we never had the Baptist in the early days. And Jehovah's Witness is here now.

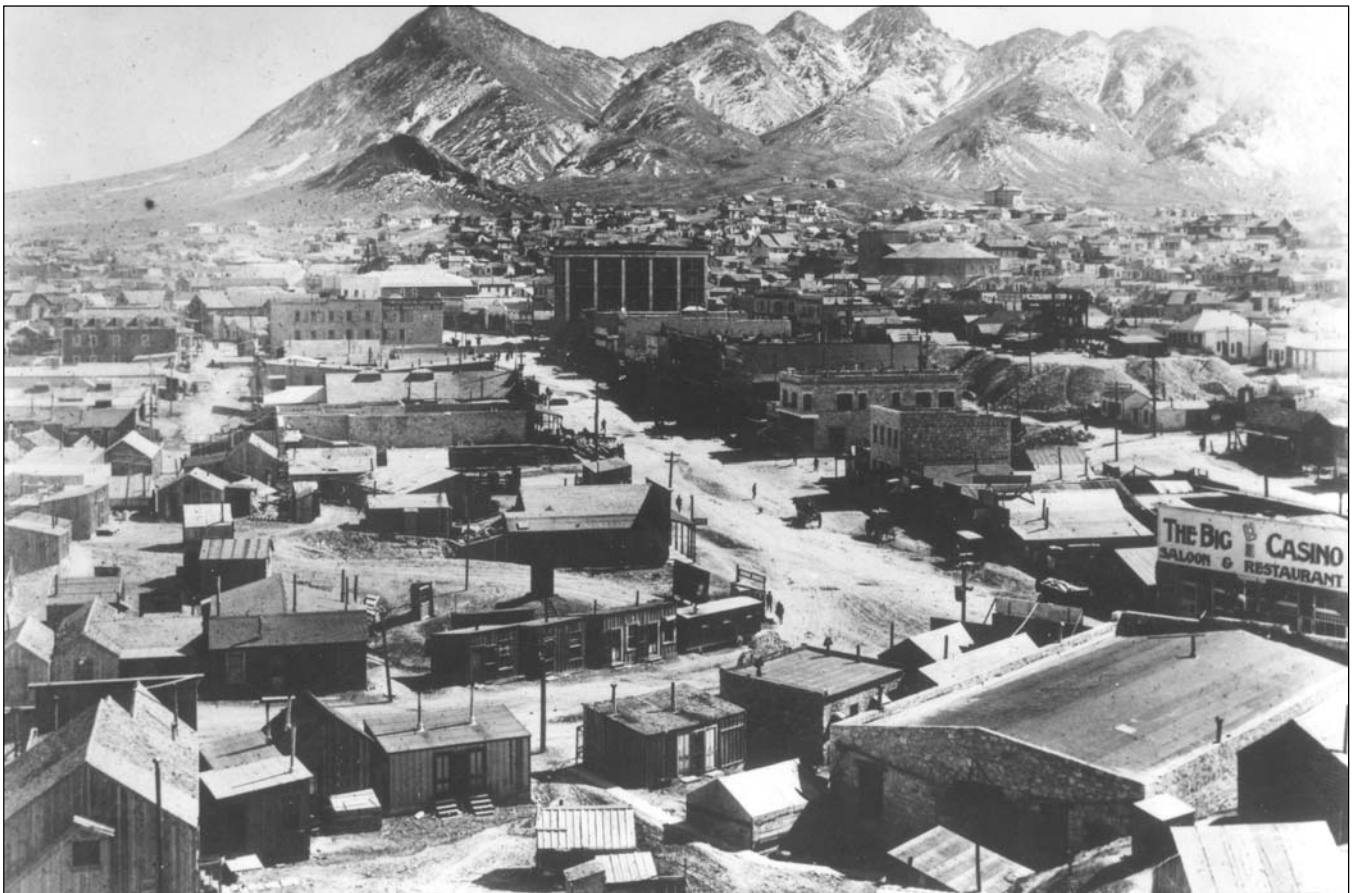
You belong to St. Patrick's?

Yes, St. Patrick's Catholic Church.

Can you give me a brief history of that church and how it's changed through the years?

Well, I don't know. My mother said that the church originally was down on St. Patrick Street right where the motel is now, and the Jim Butler mine. They started that mine, so, I guess they had to move the church up here on Summit Street. They moved it with horses. It was a nice little church; it was pretty. It was a wooden building. It was bigger than the Manhattan church. It caught on fire in 1961 or 1962.

PHOTOGRAPHS



Panoramic view of Tonopah, Nevada, ca. 1906.
Prior to the discovery of gold and silver on the site in 1900, this was an empty landscape.

Photograph courtesy of Nevada State Historical Society Collection, UNLV Library



One of Goldfield's many stone buildings being erected during the building boom of 1906-1908.

Photograph courtesy of Central Nevada Historical Society Collection, UNLV Library



The interior of Friedman's Department Store in Goldfield, ca. 1918.
Frank Friedman stands at left; Lena Hammond is second from right.

Photograph courtesy of Lena Hammond Collection, UNLV Library



Funeral procession down Tonopah's Main Street, 1907.

Photograph courtesy of Austin Wardle Collection, UNLV Library



The Central Market butcher shop in Tonopah, 1918.
Lena Hammond is leaning against counter at left.

Photograph courtesy of Lena Hammond Collection, UNLV Library



Carroll and Elsie Humphrey (at left of table) in the Tonopah Club, ca. World War II.
Mr. Humphrey managed the club.

Photograph courtesy of Minnie Perchetti Collection, UNLV Library



Public swimming pool below the Victor mine in Tonopah, 1920s. Water for the pool
was pumped from deep in the Victor shafts and was always warm.

Photograph courtesy of Minnie Perchetti Collection, UNLV Library

ORIGINAL INDEX: FOR REFERENCE ONLY

In order to standardize the design of all UNOHP transcripts for the online database, they have been reformatted, a process that was completed in early 2012. This document may therefore differ in appearance and pagination from earlier printed versions. Rather than compile entirely new indexes for each volume, the UNOHP has made each transcript fully searchable electronically. If a previous version of this volume existed, its original index has been appended to this document for reference only. A link to the entire catalog can be found online at <http://oralhistory.unr.edu/>.

A

Acree, Bert, 80
 Acree, Millie, 80
 Austin, Nevada, 2-4, 70-71;
 education, 2-3; structures,
 3, 71; utilities, 7

B

Beesley, Mr., 112
 Bell family (Nye County,
 Nevada), 64, 67, 70-75, 76,
 78-79
 Bell ranch (Nye County,
 Nevada), 64, 66, 67-68,
 72-74; food supplies/
 preparation/preservation,
 72; ranch houses, 67-68,
 72-74; transportation, 66,
 70, 72; utilities, 73, 74
 Belmont, Nevada, 44-45
 Bodie, California, 2, 4-5;
 utilities, 7
 Brackett, John, 120
 Businesses/services
 (Esmeralda, Lander and Nye
 counties, Nevada): black-
 smith shop/livery stable
 (Belmont), 44; butcher shop
 (Austin), 3-4; hotel (Round
 Mountain), 84; in Tonopah
 (see Businesses/services,
 Tonopah, Nevada); Johnson's
 grocery store (Millers), 95,
 101; Max Meyer and Company
 department store (Gold-
 field), 10, 11-12, 14-15
 Businesses/services (Tonopah,
 Nevada): Butler Theater,
 109; Central Market, 101;
 drayage business, 115-116;
 ice industry, 113; stores,
 101, 117; Tonopah Bottling
 Works, 113; Tonopah Club, 90

Butterfield Springs ranch (Nye
 County, Nevada), 18, 22,
 30-33, 36-50, 51-52, 62;
 cattle raising, 31, 33, 36;
 cattle rustling, 45; dairy-
 ing, 43; employees, 60, 62;
 food supplies/preparation/
 preservation, 39-43; medical
 practices/folk remedies,
 46-50, 58-62; social life
 on, 43-44; sports and
 leisure, 30-32; structures,
 37-39, 41, 42, 49; transpor-
 tation, 22, 31, 46-47;
 utilities, 39

C

Catalogs, mail order, 28, 32,
 45-46, 71
 Cattle, raising of, 31, 33,
 36; dairying, 43; rustling,
 45
 Clark, Jim, 92
 Clark, Mary, 92
 Cohen, Jacob M., 10, 11, 15
 Cooper, Ann, 90
 Cornell, Nellie, 119
 Craig, Dr., 99-100
 Currant Creek (Nye County,
 Nevada), 19-27, 41; edu-
 cation, 19-23; social
 activities, 23-27; struc-
 tures, 19, 23, 24

D

Darrough's Hot Springs (Smoky
 Valley, Nevada), 79-81, 119
 Depression (U.S.), 94
 Derringer, Rita, 67
 Derringer ranch (Nye County,
 Nevada), 70

E

Education (Nevada), 52-55, 78, 95-96; at Currant Creek, 19-24; at Reese River, 65-68; in Austin, 2-3; in Belmont, 53; in Goldfield, 10-11, 91; in Manhattan, 82-83, 84, 118-119, 120, 121-122; in Millers, 94, 95-98; in Reno, 75-76, 117-118; in Smoky Valley, 77-78; in Tonopah, 107-109, 114-115, 122; teaching profession, 20, 21, 23, 51, 53, 65, 67-68, 76, 77, 83, 84, 95, 107, 114-115, 118, 121-122
Employment, children, 112-113

F

Falvey, Caroline (nee Wolf), 1-2, 3-4, 6, 7, 8, 10
Falvey, William, 1, 2, 5, 6, 7
Falvey family, 1-2, 3-4, 5-7, 8
Family life, 4, 6-8, 27-31, 32, 33-44, 45-50, 53-54, 58-62, 71-72, 74-75, 98, 99-101, 102-104, 117; child-rearing practices/discipline, 4, 33-36, 50, 55, 98, 100-101, 102; domestic chores, 27-28, 32, 36-39, 40, 43, 46, 71, 74-75, 98, 102-104, 117; food supplies/preparation/preservation, 7-8, 39-43, 72, 101; medical practices/folk remedies, 46-50, 58-62, 99-100
Farington ranch (Smoky Valley, Nevada), 77
Finnegan, Inez Sharp, 18-63; education, 19-23, 51, 53-54; employment, 23, 51-52; family, 18, 19, 22, 27-62
Food supplies/preparation/preservation, 7-8, 39-43, 72
Foster, Josephine Johnson, 91-105; education, 91, 95-98; family, 91, 92-95, 98-99, 102-103

G

Goldfield, Nevada, 5-15, 91, 116; businesses/services, 10, 11-12, 14-15; education, 10-11, 91; fires, 102, 116-117; prostitution, 11, 13-14; sports and leisure, 8-10; structures, 5-7, 10, 91; utilities, 7
Gootch, Mrs., 114

H

Hammond, Lena, 1-17; education, 2-3, 10-11; employment, 10-12, 14, 15; family, 1-2, 3-4, 5-7, 8, 10
Holloway, Sidney, 60, 62-63
Holloway family, 62-63
Horses, 5, 22-23, 31-33, 70
Humphrey, Carroll, 77, 79, 81, 84, 90
Humphrey, Elsie, 64-90; education, 64-65, 75-76, 78-79; employment, 67-68, 77-78, 81-84, 88; family, 64, 71, 73, 76, 78-79
Humphrey family (Manhattan, Nevada), 81, 82

I

Indians, 66-67, 77-78

J

Johnson family (Millers, Nevada), 94, 95, 101

L

Labor, organized: in Tonopah, Nevada, 123

M

McCann, Grace, 55-58
Manhattan, Nevada, 81-84, 85-87, 118-122; education,

82-83, 84, 118-119, 121-122;
 mines and mining, 85, 120,
 121; sports and leisure,
 85-87; structures, 82-83,
 118
 Manor, Sam "Barney," 91, 92,
 94, 99-100, 102
 Marchmont family (Millers,
 Nevada), 95
 Max Meyer and Company depart-
 ment store (Goldfield,
 Nevada), 10, 11-12, 14-15
 Medical practices/folk
 remedies, 46-50, 58-62,
 99-100
 Meyer, Max, 13, 14-15
 Millers, Nevada, 93-95, 96-98,
 101; businesses/services,
 95, 101; education, 94,
 95-98; mills and milling,
 93; structures, 93, 94, 96,
 97, 104, 105; swimming pool,
 93; utilities, 98
 Mining/milling, 4-5, 85, 87,
 93, 94, 105, 113, 121

P

Pine nut gathering, 27
 Porter, Georgia, 122
 Prostitution, 11, 12, 13-14,
 105

R

Railroad Valley (Nevada),
 18-19
 Religion, 26-27, 124
 Roberts, Elizabeth, 106-124;
 education, 107-108, 117-118;
 employment, 118-119, 120,
 121-122; family, 106, 115-
 116, 117
 Roberts, Mr., 120-121, 122
 Roberts family, 121
 Round Mountain, Nevada, 84,
 85, 119

S

St. Patrick's Catholic Church
 (Tonopah, Nevada), 124
 Sharp, Edna, 19, 22, 35, 37,
 48, 51, 52, 54-55
 Sharp family (Nye County,
 Nevada), 18, 19, 22, 27-62
 Sharp ranch (Nye County,
 Nevada). See Butterfield
 Springs ranch
 Sports and leisure, 5, 8-10,
 15-17, 19-20, 23-26, 30-32,
 54, 68-69, 70, 71, 79-81,
 86-87, 88, 93, 100, 102,
 108-112, 119-120
 Structures (Austin, Nevada):
 houses, 3, 71; school, 3
 Structures (Goldfield,
 Nevada): Max Meyer and
 Company department store,
 10; schools, 10, 91; tent
 housing, 5-7
 Structures (Millers, Nevada):
 housing, 94, 104, 105,
 mills, 93; school, 94, 96,
 97; swimming pool, 93
 Structures (Nye County,
 Nevada): at Butterfield
 Springs ranch, 37-39, 41,
 42, 49; at Currant Creek,
 19, 23, 24; at Reese River,
 65, 72-74; in Manhattan,
 82-83, 118; in Smoky Valley,
 77; in Tonopah (see Struc-
 tures, Tonopah, Nevada);
 ranch houses, 37-39, 41, 42,
 49, 72-74; schools, 19, 23,
 24, 65, 77, 82-83, 118
 Structures (Tonopah, Nevada):
 Butler Theater, 109; dance
 halls, 110; housing 89-90,
 104, 105, 115; L & L Motel,
 105; red light district,
 105; St. Patrick's Catholic
 Church, 124; storage ware-
 house, 116; swimming pool at
 Victor mine, 110; Tonopah
 Bottling Works, 113

T

Taylor, Margaret, 48
Toiyabe Literary Club
 (Manhattan, Nevada), 15-17,
 86-87
Tonopah, Nevada, 87-90, 91,
 99, 101, 104-105, 106,
 109-113, 115-116, 117,
 122-123; army air base,
 88-89; blacks in, 122-123;
 businesses/services (see
 Businesses/services,
 Tonopah, Nevada); Chinese
 in, 123-124; churches in,
 124; education, 107-109,
 114-115, 122; fires, 117;
 Mexicans in, 123; sports and
 leisure, 88, 108-112; struc-
 tures (see Structures,
 Tonopah, Nevada); transpor-
 tation, 89, 112, 113-114,
 115-116, 117; utilities, 104
Tonopah Army Air Base
 (Nevada), 88-89
Transportation, 5, 6, 22,
 31-32, 46-47, 56, 66, 70,
 72, 81, 89, 91, 100-101,
 108, 112, 113-114, 115-116,
 117
Trueba family (Tonopah,
 Nevada), 104, 105

Women: discrimination against,
 51, 52, 55; occupations of
 (see Women, occupations of);
 role of, 27-28, 31, 32,
 36-37, 38, 44, 50, 51-52,
 55-57, 58, 62-63, 71, 102,
 109, 117; social organiza-
 tions, 15-17, 86-87

Women, occupations of: book-
 keeper, 15; doctor, 47-48;
 hostess, 88; janitor, 118;
 midwife, 48, 49; nurse, 47,
 48; sales clerk, 10-12, 14;
 teachers, 20-21, 23, 53,
 67-68, 76-77, 81-84, 95,
 107, 114-115, 118-119,
 121-122

World War II, 88

U

University of Nevada (Reno):
 normal school, 75, 76
Utilities, 6, 7, 23, 28, 39,
 65-66, 73, 74, 96, 98, 104

V

Victor Park (Tonopah, Nevada),
 110-111

W

Water, 4-5, 6, 27, 65-66, 73,
 96, 98, 103-104, 110
Windows, Dr. (White Pine
 County, Nevada), 47-48